

hNgovwer

caricature of a retarded hack

Duane Schlitz



## Hangover

### Chapter 1

#### Preparation

Telephone..."Yo", he coughed into the phone as he set his cigarette on the rim of the empty beer can. Why couldn't he break down and buy an ash tray, apparently that would categorize him as a smoker, something he was intrinsically opposed to. The fact that he had a chrome Zippo, a cigar cutter and half a pack of Camel Lights didn't seem to qualify him, he still didn't have an ashtray. That one final piece of the puzzle, once purchased, it is the invisible point of no return, after which you were destined to a life of nicotine stained hands, yellow teeth, smelly clothes and eventual emphysema followed by a two month period of coughing up bits of lung, until the Grim Reaper from the Blue Oyster Cult video came to cart your sorry ass off. "Don't fear the reaper" he hummed to himself as he took another drag.

"Hey man are you going to the Club tonight?" the telephone asked him. There is that strange moment on the cusp of confusion and realization, before you know who you are talking to that you think maybe the phone has a soul, and really wants to get out of the house tonight, this was a phase, and virtually passed unnoticed.

"Fuck yeah, wouldn't miss it.", he responded to whom he now realized was his buddy Ed. Ed was also known as The Boil in their circle of friends. See Ed had this little mishap snowboarding, couldn't seem to stay off his ass. Consequently he developed a sebaceous cyst at the tip of his tailbone. This wasn't something he was proud of, but not embarrassed by either. It was more like his trademark. The cyst was about the size of a large lemon, but much darker and more uneven in texture. It had to be drained a number of times as the doctor performing the not so delicate

surgery did not properly sterilize his instruments and created an infection. Not just any old infection, but an oozing puss filled mass that even the other bacteria in his body were jealous of. Kind of like tapioca mixed with toe jam, boogers and phlegm. A real feast for any kind of secretion loving parasite. Ed was The Boil.

"Cool, well head over and grab some beers on the way", Ed chimed, as if he would be entitled to some of those beers, since he suggested such an original idea.

"Alright, I've gotta jump in the shower real quick."

"Late" Ed barked as he hung up the phone.

The shower was a long way off at this point, though our hero knew it was inevitable. He had a pattern of showering, Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday night before the club.

This worked out pretty well because he had that kind of hair, like Robert Plant at the height of his sausage pants, golden god, fringe wearing glory waved around on stage. Locks that girls actually complemented him on, but if he washed too often it was more like a rolling wheat field of static and dry scalp.

"Cock Rock!" he screamed, realizing he may have missed his calling. Thousands of underage women throwing their underpants at him while he strutted like a rooster, pecking and scratching his way through an inspired rendition of Whole Lotta Love! That's the life.

Fumbling through his eclectic yet pathetic CD collection he decided upon Renegade Soundwave.

"Catch Ya Later Baby I Gotta Split", the speakers informed him as he bounced to the fridge. A couple of beers were left from the previous night's Seinfeld party that he threw. No this wasn't the night to have beer, he concluded as he reached for the bird.

You know the bird, the one the Pilgrims ate at Plymouth rock, B.S.ing the Indians that they just wanted to be friends, when only a few years later, genocide would occur on the scale of Hitler and Stalin. Yeah, come eat with us, show us how to grow corn, bend the fuck over. Poor savages. They just wanted to chill out when these snobbish European pricks showed up and told them they couldn't smoke any more peace pipe. Well fuck you and the boat you floated in on, how would you like it if I cut your fucking scalp off and fed it to you while pulling out your fingernails one at a time, you pre-Nazi imperialist murdering coward bastard. Unfortunately Europe had developed the gun. POW. "Mommy, mommy! Daddy bagged a wild turkey for dinner!" Hooray for the noble hunter, real challenging to kill something with a musket Bungalow Bill, what did you kill, Bungalow Bill?

Where was the coke? He could never drink straight bourbon, instant yak. Coke seemed to complement the caramel smoothness which was Wild Turkey. The 80 proof though mellower couldn't touch the 101, which really got the system lubricated in a big industrial hurry.

Measured out precisely with the shot glass he swiped in college, he poured in one jigger, then topped it off with two healthy splashes. "Why do I waste my time measuring" he pondered as he filled the rest of the glass with cola and ice. The mixture splashed on his shirt as he dropped the ice cubes in, forgetting to put them in first, but being too lazy to dirty another glass, he let the stain sink in.

MMM, nothing tastes quite like that first bourbon of the night, almost an instant buzz, this called for a smoke. The old Camel's were running low, but he knew he could count on Ed's brother Cody to have a pack. Ed and Cody lived together in a modest, but spacious townhome in the Barrio. It was pretty safe as long as the taggers weren't around, and you didn't leave your car parked on the street. What the fuck are these shitty little rodents doing with cans of

spray paint. Did the human species suddenly devolve and become like prehistoric timberwolves pissing on every tree they could muster up the urine for? They leave their mark on everything, as if they own it. I'll bet if they did own it they wouldn't fuck it up with spray painting things like LOCOZ and CRAZEE all over it. No, they would probably pull out a Glock and cap any fucking wise guy homey that tried to pull that shit, but fuck man, society is keeping them down BOYYYYYEE, don't you know you gotta fight the power. Not like there's any problem with fighting the power, but what the hell does spray painting an honest business do to that end. Spray paint the fucking capital or something, not the local dry cleaners. Where's my lighter.

It was on the kitchen counter next to the can he had been ashing into. He did his best Zippo trick, actually his only Zippo trick where he flicked it open with a quick snap of the fingers, turned the metal wheel to scrape the waiting piece of flint, engaged the spark actuator, which in turn ignited the filament, who had been bathing in lighter fluid, created a flame, and moved it slowly toward the cylinder of love which was dangling between his pursed lips. He knew better than to move it too quickly, he had lost his eyelashes on any number of occasions in reckless moments of nicotine hysteria. Dragging slowly on the filtered end of his pride and joy, he breathed a sigh of relief, which was accompanied by a trail of thick, concentrated grey smoke. He clicked the lighter shut, which was his way of thanking it for a job well done.

You wouldn't have called him a smoker if you were one, but if you weren't you probably would. He smoked when he drank, rarely during the week, but about a pack and a half on the weekend. James Dean's soul suddenly entered and left his body in the form of a cold chill down his spine. Cooooool.

Sitting on the couch, the remote was just a little too convenient. What was on tonight? Friday, let's see...beats the shit out of me. Current Affair investigating women have

gone through their whole lives without ever reaching orgasm, the segment was called "The Harem of Dr. Feelgood". What a lucky dude he thought to himself, until he saw the patients.

Holy shit, did somebody leave the gate unlocked at the ugly farm. These fucking broads! No shit, put on some fucking makeup, wear baggy clothes, comb your hair, and drop about 200 big ones, then maybe I'd fuck you with Ed's dick.

What's this, a fucking dude!!! What the hell is he doing in the audience, fucking pervert. Click Click Click, Blossom in Paris, Vinny chased her down, but she is uncertain. Ah, to be young and rich enough to have the dough to go to France, that little Debbie Gibson wanna be wench. Fuck the French, arrogant pieces of shit, that's all they are. The only thing they make that place worth a shit is champagne, but give me Tott's any day for 1/10th the price. White Star has its merits, but in a blind taste test, 90% of people couldn't tell the difference. Where do they get off, those lazy Eurotrash hairy-pit pukes. Click Click Click, Erkel, "AAAAAAH!" Off.

Hunger pain. I won't make it through the night without some food, he assured himself. What was there in this crummy little apartment that could satisfy an appetite like his. Nothing. Thoughts ran through his mind without wiping their feet on the mat. He heard the first three chords of La Bamba and knew the border was calling. Nothing like the Bell on an empty stomach. Usually reserved for the trip home from the Club, he would have to stop on the way to Ed's. He smoked his Camel to the nub, which he usually didn't do, but old Jimmy Dean was still bouncing around the room, and his ass was beginning to melt into the cushion. Slamming the remainder of his cocktail, he went to the kitchen to pour a fresh one. No jigger this time, just two fingers in a dirty glass, just like the old west. Two fucking fingers in a dirty ass glass, two fucking fingers in a dirty ass glass, this could be a song he thought to himself. He went over, turned off the stereo, and plugged in his Strat. Grunge pedal on full overload. Distorted into a square wave, the electromagnetic waves from a guitar

pickup take on a whole new meaning. This meaning was not lost on our hero. He took full advantage of the shape, texture and tone of the beautiful sounds which were his own.

"I don't want no girl scout cookies, I don't get off on phone sex, but I see my girl with her head in the stove and I slap her big fat ass! Two fucking fingers in a dirty ass glass, Two fucking fingers in a dirty ass glass!", he knew it was Grammy material, pure and simple, NARAS would have to give him the nod for this one. He dove into a blazing solo, the likes of which hadn't been seen since Randy Rhoads took a ride on the Crazy Train, which incidentally was a Crazy Plane that ended up wasting him. He couldn't recall the exact story, but knew that more or less a plane crashed into the tour bus and killed young Randy in his sleep. He was fucking straight edge too, man. Not like that fucking Ozzy who hardly knows his own name any more, but manages to remember the words to War Pigs when he hears those opening chords pierce like shishkabob skewers into his ears. Generals gathered in their masses, just like witches at black masses! Pop, there went the G string, the same fucking one that broke every fucking time. He didn't have the patience to change it tonight, there was clubbing to be done. The guitar fed back for another 17 seconds before he decided to kill the power.

Feedback was beautiful to him, that pleasant place between melody and chaos where one could watch the grass grow, sip on a Mint Julep, swing with a southern belle out in front, on the porch, try to cop a feel, get slapped in the face, grab her by the hair, and plant a sloppy kiss on her lips until she gives in and you tongue wrestle with her for a minute. Her daddy sees all this, and since he doesn't want his little angel going out with a long hair, he has been watching, a now he bursts out of the front door, with a bat in his hand. She tries to defend you, but pops shoves her into the raspberry plants by the door, which actually have lots of little stickers on them, which pisses you off, so you swing, miss and get a fucking Ted Williams Louisville

Slugger in the back of the knee. The ground looks pretty comfortable at this point so you decide to fall face first into it. He kicks you in the gut, and says "Get the fuck out of here, and don't come back until you can treat my princess with respect!" Well fuck you, you psycho redneck jackass, and your little dick smoking dike daughter. You hear shots fired as you spit gravel across his lawn and all over his freshly painted Chevy stepside pickup. Click, the guitar amp fades abruptly out.

Shotzy came up and licked his bare foot. That little rat dog, why does it need to eat every day. "Alright, I'll feed you."

He meandered to the kitchen, opened a fresh can of moist dog food. As if the cigarette wasn't enough, this cured his hunger for the next 42 minutes. He felt lucky to be able to choose his food, rather than eat this ground up pig hoof and mackerel fin poison. Nearly feeling sympathetic, he suddenly remembered what happened last Thanksgiving, when he brought Shotzy to his parents, and the dog ate turkey grease. It flew through the intestines, so fast, you would have to have put an official olympic atomic timekeeping device on it, which was coordinated to the National Atomic Facility at Los Alamos, New Mexico, to begin to accurately represent the velocity at which it traveled. Timed to the motion of atoms, the atomic clock is considered to be the most accurate source of timekeeping, he recalled as he came back to the familiar argument over whether time was actual or subjective. Einstein discovered that time is relative to gravity, but there is one constant source of time and motion, which are completely dependent upon each other. That constant is the speed of light. No matter which direction you are traveling, and your relative velocity, it will always register at 136,000 miles per second. A very confusing topic, but seems to suggest that there is time in a real sense, but for everyday purposes, time is extremely subjective. Take for example the distortion of time that occurs when under the influence of THC. This is a very real

effect, but widely ignored in Physicist's circles. Maybe they need to start getting baked to understand the meaning of the universe. Those uptight, greasy haired, wrinkled clothes, polyester wearing bald spot imbeciles, loosen up already! I'll bet Einstein pulled a few tubes.

"Here's your food pup!" he exclaimed as he set the bowl down for the ever impatient animal.

Shotzy had a remarkable appetite for it's size, which, in turn, led to feces as long as the dog itself. This may seem physically impossible, but he actually measured one astounding log at 17 3/8 inches. Shotzy only measured 13 1/2 including the tail. Granted, it wasn't that big around, but just picturing 20 or so shit filled inches of Dachshund intestine crammed into that little body was difficult at best. He hoped the dog could wait until he got home to dump, but knew it was unlikely.

Picking through his pile of dirty clothes, he found a relatively fresh pair of tighty whities. He grabbed his drink, and headed to the shower. To shave or not to shave? Blow it off, it will be dark in there anyway. Tossing the butt of the smoke into the crapper, he cranked up the hot water of the shower. Unfortunately for our hero, his cruddy apartment had one of those cheap tub, shower deals, and he had forgotten to turn it back to tub. Stinging needles of ice cold water dowsed his shoulders and chest. Screaming, he pulled away and rectified the situation.

Glug, glug, glug. Down went the bourbon and coke and water from the ice cubes that had melted. After a couple of these, you stop tasting the alcohol, which didn't bother him, because that meant he could mix them stronger.

The water felt marvelous, once it was properly adjusted. He entered, and had a near blackout, but pulled up just in time, like a P-38 Lightning dropping a torpedo on a Jap battleship. Bullseye! Now just get back to the ship so you

can make another run. "Nice shot, Gus" the earpiece in the helmet garbled.

"Send those Nips to the bottom of the sea where they belong."

Now if the nose will come up a little more...BLAM!, straight into the control tower. Flames rise from the mid pacific on a crystal clear day. 4,503 miles from home, his lifeless body burns, high atop the rigging of the Japanese Imperial Navy's flagship. Done.

Dries off, locates Club clothes, favorite dancing shoes, leather jacket, chrome belt. Questions whether he is fit to drive, grabs the keys, and bails out the door, patting Shotzy on the head.

The Bell. That succulent Bell. Two Taco Supremes, a Burrito Supreme, all with wild sauce, and a large water. Dying to eat it, he decided to wait until he arrived at Ed's house. A 12-pack of Keystone from the Liquy and off to the party pad. This is when he first laid his eyes on her.

Who was this girl. She was sitting at the kitchen table, chatting with Cody. Was it one of Cody's girlfriends from the army? No, too cute. Was it one of Ed's? Seriously. He spoke, "Hi, my name is Gil."

"Oh, hi. Do you live here too?" she sweetly inquired.

"No, I just mess the place up for them. What's your name?"

"Deidre, I had a flat and Cody gave me a lift to the gas station. He said I should come party with you guys, since I just moved here, and everyone I work with is pretty dull." A voice like strawberry twizzlers. Fresh out of the pack, while they are still soft. Mmm, delicious, he thought.

His eyes glazed over for a brief moment, but catching himself he clichéd "Oh, what do you do?"

"I teach at the Colorado Institute of Art. I only have two classes so far, but they are going to give me another one soon." Biting her lip as she talked, he could almost feel how the pressure of her ruby red tooth protecting folds of rapturous femininity would feel against his. That short blonde hair, Gil loved "short hairs", that button nose, those double D's!

"Cool" he stated in his most Fonzarelli way. "Want a beer?"

"Thanks, Cody already got me one.", the words slithering off her licker like lime daiquiri juice from a blender. Could this be one of those Penthouse Letter nights? If he only knew what was in store.

## Chapter 2

### Association

Gil sat at the table, and asked The Boil to grab his guitar.

Ed said the G-string had snapped on him, and that he didn't have another one. "Wow, are you guys in a band?" she excitedly supposed.

Ed, feeling somewhat left out, proclaimed wholeheartedly, "Well, sort of. We record a lot of songs, but we don't play live that often."

Deidre's interest had been sparked. Gil smelled blood. Unfortunately, so did Ed, Cody, and every other woman loving male that had ever crossed Deidre's path. She knew what was coming, and quickly said "My boyfriend is a musician too."

If penises going limp made a sound, it occurred at that moment, in unison, through the house, up the stairs, and back to reality. Aw fuck, they thought as they simultaneously calculated their relative chances of getting any. Fortunately for Deidre, Gil was not so easily dissuaded. He was more like the shark in Jaws. Even though he had been shot, had a spear in his eye, and was bleeding out his urethra, he went back for more. Never say die, NEVER! Besides, he thought, why is she hanging with us if this boyfriend is so special.

Pulling out a taco supreme, he stared at it, as if he had seen it in a dream. He bit in, sucking on his beer between bites, seemingly unconscious to the fact that anyone else was in the room. "Oh, did you all want any?"

"Yeah man, cruise me an item." Ed politely demanded.

"Seriously" Gil sarcastically retorted, as he polished off the taco while simultaneously unwrapping the burrito supreme and taking a drink. The liquid from the can glided down his

throat, like a seven year old who got a Slip N Slide for his birthday, which was luckily in summer, so he could use it right away. It sped through his larynx, without so much as a hello for the tonsils, past the lungs, which were beginning to take on a brownish tint unbeknownst to Gil, and faceplanted into the flowerbed of his stomach. Refreshment.

The kid came up with a bloody nose, and a chrysanthemum in his hair, but the beer just laughed hysterically, as it uncorked the alcohol contained within, and jet sprayed it into Gil's bloodstream through the walls of his intestines. That's when our hero caught an edge. With kind of a half-hiccup, half-cough, he released a sour-cream covered nugget of tomato into the dead air space which hung like a wet towel over the table. "Groooooossss!" Deidre yelped, as the creamy vegetable hit the linoleum.

"Oops, sorry"

"What the fuck is wrong with you dude?" Cody ingeniously inquired.

"Ease, man, I'll clean it up in a minute" Gil responded.

From experience, Cody knew this was bullshit, but let it slide in the presence of such a pretty girl.

Deidre offered "Let me get it." She's a keeper, she's a keeper! The thought tickled the funny bone portion of his brain like a comedian who laughs after every joke he tells. It gets old, but if he has a funny enough laugh, you can't help but laugh along. What a babe.

She went to the kitchen and grabbed the paper towels, picked up the red and white renegade chunk, deposited it in the trash receptacle, and sat back down, without so much as a sour look. Incredible. Women just don't do that sort of thing anymore. Back in the fifties, your wife would make dinner, clean the table, and bring you beers while you

watched the fights and had a stogie. Archie Bunker rules! Every man has a little Archie in him. If they don't, then they are just full of estrogen, enjoy Alan Alda, iron their girlfriends underpants, and are not men. They are in that grey area. That zone of mixed emotions. "I like the way silk feels against my skin, but my boss would shoot me if I showed up to work in a blouse." Fucking lipstick loving, rouge packing, shaved leg dinks. They give all men a bad name, but any girl who says they want a guy like that is just playing a power trip game to see what you are made of. If you give in and act like that, she'll run you over with your own Volvo.

Deidre looked good, even when she was picking up the glop on the floor. The kind of woman you might even let drive your car (but not alone, no girl should ever drive your car alone). Gil loved women. All women. Not simply for their relative utility, but in a more spiritual way as well. Some girls could even make him laugh. His ex-girlfriend used to make him laugh, when she wasn't nagging him, and I mean nagging him. Hurry up, don't eat garlic, we always eat where you want, I've already seen this movie, I'm NOT cleaning your underwear. He sure didn't miss that, but she did make him laugh. She used to get the funniest expression on her face when he would poke her nose, like it was a switch for her lips or something, but it would trigger a funny look, which generally aroused a chortle.

Lauren had been out of his life for a long time, but they still kept in touch. You know, she'd call when she felt sorry for herself and wanted him to make her feel better, or she'd call when she needed a favor, or she'd call when she heard he was dating someone new, apparently to size up the competition. What competition, get over it already. Deidre was in a class by herself.

Sitting in front of a cheap hotel room landscape painting, Deidre reminded Gil of the Mona Lisa, totally out of place relative to the backdrop, yet breathtaking. He couldn't

stop looking at her. This began to worry her, so she spoke, "What time should we leave?"

"We'll go after we finish these beers" Cody assured.

Ed had brought down his tape player with some of their recent recordings to play. "Sex Assassin" seemed to strike a nerve with her, but she loved the beat. "Into the Shit" was her immediate favorite. "Wow, you guys are really good." she reinforced.

"Thanks, we're trying." Gil explained.

Noticing she was in need, he handed her another beer. She winked at him, giving him a heart palpitation. Those gigantic blue eyes, the color of blue Charmin. Powder blue, unscented, no pattern, 3 ply. Only the best for my butt, he thought silently. Diving into her eyes, headfirst, he noticed she was staring back at him. Cody decided this was becoming too mushy, and called the KGB. For the uninitiated, KGB stands for Killer Green Bud. The kind of weed that Timothy Leary would ejaculate over. The kind of weed that Dennis Hopper would throw up from. The kind of weed that Hunter Thompson would take two bong hits of and get the munchies from. The kind of weed that would have made Bill Clinton want to buy a bag. The kind of weed that would have made those bats feel good to Jack Nicholson in Easy Rider. The kind of weed that...holy shit, Deidre was sucking it down like it was an oxygen mask on a plane that had lost 3 of four engines, and was diving into the Gulf of Mexico. Corpus Christi is fogged in, and we probably couldn't land this bird even if it were clear. Hold on everybody, we're gonna crash! "Here you go" she said as she slid the pipe to Gil.

## Chapter 3

### Emancipation

He breathed deep, instantly knowing he had made a big mistake.

His throat burned, and every time this happened, he ended up bumping his head on the ceiling. Way too high for this early in the evening. He assumed his one saving grace would be the fact that Deidre had been sucking it down too.

Deidre was the prettiest girl at the tractor pull. Who could weigh themselves down the most, and still cross the finish line? Ed hit hard, Cody puffed, knowingly. This was The Kind. Deidre was the first to laugh.

Her eyes, now looking more oriental than European, were the color of Balls O Fire Salmon Eggs. She pointed at Gil's hair and started to laugh. Normally, Gil would have been a little disconcerted, but under the circumstance, he could kind of see her point. Gil warmed up his pipes "WAAY DOWN IN-SIDE, WO-MA, YOOOU NEEED ME!"

Deidre, Cody and Ed simultaneously, as if on cue, joined in, "LUUUUUUUUVVVVVE!" Da da da da-dank da da dank da da dank.

It was like Live Aid. Cody Bonham played the Folger's can. Deidre was John Paul Jones, The Boil on Guitar, and the original Cock-Rocker shredding the vocal zone! A choir of angels if there ever was one. Ed was hungry, his first and last mistake.

Ed reached for the Taco Bell, just in time to feel a Lowenbrau bottle crush his fingers. He swung at Gil and grazed his cheek, but then, realizing he should've asked, backed off. Gil launched the taco of Ed's affection at him, landing squarely between the numbers of Ed's lacrosse shirt from high-school, which he always seemed to wear. What a spanker. Ed was jacked, but too embarrassed to react, so he went upstairs to change.

Change wasn't a big part of The Boil's life. He still had a Farrah Fawcett shirt from seventh grade that he would work out in. He never had change if you needed to borrow some, and he was the sole owner of the feathered haircut in the Denver-Metro area. Stonehenge could have learned a thing or two from Ed.

Gil liked to think of himself as a reflection of the cynical nature of American culture. Kind of like an anti-icon. He resented this Generation X bullshit that was trying to quantify and classify his generation, primarily because it was being written by Baby-Boomers who owned the deepest, purest resentment in his 25 year old heart. He knew that by the time his generation was forty, and in charge, there would be a Libertarian president, Marijuana would be legal, and the fucking Yuppies would be without one thin dime of Social Security. See, they spent it all on that big ass party they threw in the 80's, and they actually expect someone else to pay for the dry cleaning. Fuck them, they can all take their Saabs and drive them off Lookout Mountain together. What really pissed Gil off was advertising. He did a stint at an ad agency in Florida, and developed a whole new hatred for the Yuppie faction that was trying to maintain control over the growing resentful generation on it's heels. They actually had the nerve to ask him to cut his hair! FUCK YOU WEST ADVERTISING! SUCK MY FUCKING DICK!

Deidre gave a puzzled look, but blew it off. She had seen guys fight before. She was kind of jealous of the fact that they could be ready to come to blows one minute, and laugh the next. Girls weren't like that. They would internalize everything, and just talk shit to their friends about each other using words like "bitch" and "rag". Sometimes she wished she were a guy. This was one of them. Stoned, really really stoned, she put her head on Gil's shoulder. Ed had to put a stop to this. "Let's head" said Ed.

Cody went upstairs to get his trench coat, and Ed hopped into the bathroom. "I think you're really cute" Deidre purred in

Gil's ear. Gil figured this was the beer talking, but couldn't resist the temptation. He bent over to kiss her when she jolted, like the way your hand pulls away from the doorknob if you walk across the carpet in wool socks and then touch it, without considering the consequences. She sparked upright in her seat and said, "We had better get going."

Gil was slightly taken aback, but then remembering the compliment he had recently been on the receiving end of, he smiled, "Let's do it."

Cody came down the stairs doing his best Evan Dando imitation, "How it all started in the kitchen!" Collecting Ed, they all went out to the parking lot. Who would drive. The great decision had to be made again, like a thousand other nights. All of the familiar phrases were uttered "I drove last time", "I don't have any gas", "A headlight's out on mine", when suddenly a new, almost elegant voice rose above the lies, "SHOTGUN" Deidre screamed. She jumped into the passenger seat of Gil's car, which had been circled by the brothers, thus giving away it's location. Gil figured this was cool, except for how high he had become, at least he had a hot potato in his front seat instead of some fucking sausage meister. He turned the key, engaged the transmission, placed the car in drive and pulled steadily away from the curb.

The trip seemed to take forever, which is not particularly amazing, remembering the relationship of gravity and THC. The buildings moved much slower than the car they were in, which was a beige Buick Regal. Although old, it had been garaged for most of it's long life. It was the workhorse of cars. Like those horses with the hairy ass feet in the Budweiser commercials. Boy does Bud ever suck. If they fed those horses that fucking swill, they would drop the fuck dead, right there in the middle of the parade. Coors, now that's a man's beer, he thought as they passed over Santa Fe Drive. Deidre asked what the name of the club they were

going to was, so Cody informed her, that they call it The Club because it is the only decent place in town. Sure there are other clubs, but this one was like a home away from home. Though they rarely met girls of any caliber above .177 Pellets that you shoot from a pump up Crossman pistol, they figured their odds had increased exponentially by having this amazing specimen with them.

The strange thing about girls is, when you don't have a girlfriend, none of them have their watch on. They won't give you the time of day. When you do have a chick on your arm, they wink at you, talk to you when your girl goes to the bathroom, and maybe even ask you to dance. This all stems from the "I Only Want What Someone Else Has" syndrome. Guys aren't like that. A pretty girl is a pretty girl. If she has a guy with her, that makes it tougher, but, realizing girls are always trying to upgrade, they give it a shot. Sure you might get a punch in the nose, but she will think he is an asshole then and then your chances just got better. And what's up with strippers? Like, you can come to the bar and see my boobs, and I'll even rub them in your face for a buck, but don't try to talk to me once I leave, because I'm going to school and I'm not doing this for the rest of my life, and I AM NOT A SLUT, do you want to come home with me? Go fucking figure.

Deidre was no gutter slut. She was the Led Zeppelin mirror at the fair downtown that you had to hit three underinflated balloons with dull darts to win, back when you were an aspiring cock-rocker. She was the single pepperocini in the greek salad at the Olive Garden that you had to fight for. She was a brand new reel of AMPEX 456 1/2" tape, that you couldn't wait to record your next hit onto. She was a tank of Super Unleaded, with STP gas treatment and octane booster. She was an ice cold wind when you are mowing the yard on a scorching day in July, when you are sure the ozone is gone from all the polluting the previous generation has done, which you had no part in, but are being expected to clean up. She was the middle of an OREO. She was the one.

## Chapter 4

### Rotation

They arrived at the club about 8:30, which gave them time to slam a quart. This was the ritual. Go to the liquor store, buy a quart, listen to some tunes, slam it until 8:55, and still get in free.

They filed out of Gil's car and into the liquy. Four Avalanche's were purchased. They were walking back to the car when some other friends of theirs showed up. It was Steven and Ray, off work early from Bennigan's. They both saw Deidre, and automatically figured none of the guys with her could have snagged such a babe, there must be something up. "Hey, what's going on here?" Steven sardonically interjected.

Sticking her hand out she announced, "Hi, my name is Deidre."

This was just what Gil didn't want to happen. The one cool thing about Steven being there was that any girl who would like him seemed to hate Gil, but any girl that hated him seemed to love Gil. They weren't that different in reality, but the way they came across to people, and the types that they attracted were polar opposites. Ray on the other hand got more action than the nickel slot machines at McCarren airport. He had a new girl AT LEAST once a week. How he did it is still a subject of debate, but the fact that he did was never in doubt. "We have to down these" Ed told the visitors "then we will meet you guys inside."

"Don't keep her all to yourselves" Ray shouted as they walked away.

She seemed to like all of the attention she had been receiving lately, but it went to her head. "Who are those guys?" she inquired suggestively. She spoke as if she were talking to Isaac in the lounge of the Pacific Princess, and Mac Davis

had just walked by in an officer's outfit. Isaac explains that he just received the congressional medal of honor for surviving 12 years in a Vietnam prison camp, and the Cruise Line was giving him a free trip. This really gets her juices flowing, but she soon comes back to the third stone from the sun and discovers drool all over her cardigan. Not just any drool, the kind of drool that burns like battery acid through clothing. The kind of drool that Alien hacked onto Sigourney Weaver's bare ass when they were in the shuttle together, the kind of drool that you could glue a model of a custom 65 Nova together with. Wait a minute, nobody drools that bad, he caught himself just on the brink of saying something stupid.

"They're our buddies from high-school." Gil explained, playing down their relative importance to the night at hand.

8:50, slam. They finished off the suds, even Deidre, and went into The Club. After getting in free and taking a quick whiz, they were ready to party.

Ministry was already pumping over the ear shattering loudspeakers. "You have run out of lies!" screamed Al. Cody bought the first round, The Boil, the second and Gil the third. When it came time for Deidre to buy, she opted for shots. Bad idea. Not just any shots, mind you, but Mind Erasers. Ouch, thought Gil, should've skipped the bourbon. No matter, this girl hit the KGB hard and is still rock and rolling, I can take it. They toasted fate and drank together. High fives were exchanged, but in the most sarcastic manner, mocking the institution from which they originated. "Yeah"

Deidre then went back for another round when Primus popped in her head. She grabbed her three escorts, and dragged them to the dance floor. And could she fucking dance. Dancing that had never been seen in that club before. Grinding like a Makita orbital sander, while gyrating like the guidance system in an MX Missile. All eyes were on her, up to and

including Gil's. If she would have danced in the same spot for too long, there would have been a spontaneous ignition of all of the methane, which Gil was now excreting, and alcohol within a nine foot radius. For these purposes, Gil imagined he could get away with 7/22 rather than Pi. She was smoking. Not just dancing, but a cigarette. A girl after his own heart! Gil was sporting a woody when it happened. He had to go to the bathroom.

## Chapter 5

### Frustration

When Gil returned, he felt like a new man, but only for a second or two. Deidre was gone. He asked Ed and Cody where she went and they said some freaky looking guy with a nose ring came and dragged her off the floor. HIS girl dammit. Where was she?

Gil flew in a low angle orbit around the building in a trajectory similar to Apollo 10, the one that photographed the lunar surface, but didn't actually land. He searched for the Sea of Tranquillity which was in the form of one blue eyed vixen, but to no avail. He ended up back at Mission Control, Sharon's bar.

They were old friends, from the days when the club first opened, but she stopped giving him free drinks a year or so ago. He assumed it was because she lost a great deal of respect for him after seeing him with hundreds of different girls, using the same tired lines. Cody walked up to the bar that Gil was now becoming fond of leaning on. "Hey, did you find Deidre?" he inquired.

"No man, she must've bailed with that dude."

"Shitty, I thought you were moving in." Cody suggested.

"Yeah, no shit, me three." muttered Gil.

Cody consoled, "Oh well dude."

Ed walked up, in the midst of his weekly bout with frustration. Disgruntled at his lack of success he yelled, "Fuck it man, I'm goin' hoggin'."

"Ooh, bad idea, remember what happened last week." Cody reminded.

Ed, defending his lack of morals, "Yeah, at least I got some."

Some being any amount of physical contact with a female. Ed would count a peck on the cheek as high as any greater degree of affection. Swapping spit with a female was his one and only goal on Friday night. Looks became irrelevant after 10:30 or 7 beers, or a little KGB, whichever came first. As long as he was sure she was female. This was not always clear as a mutual friend of theirs had been set up on a date with a transsexual. These two were left in the car alone and began to make out. The normal guy puts his hand up it's dress and finds a fucking tree trunk. He proceeds to beat this guy up so bad they had to take him to the fucking emergency room. Ed had to be sure.

He asked the next girl that walked by to dance, and was she ever a winner. Tight blue spandex pants, which accented the saddle bags on her hips, a lace top which revealed her well worn breasts, enough eyeliner to play fullback for the Oilers in the Astrodome on Monday Night Football, alternating between blocking and running the 32 smash over the left tackle, only to get met head on by Howie fucking Long. So they went to the floor and that was the last they saw of Ed, except for observing two young lovers dancing and checking the volume of each other's mouths. Sickening, but typical.

Where the hell was Deidre. You don't run into a cool, well adjusted shorthair like that very often, in fact most of them are psychotic! Fucked up childhood, too much acid, dropouts, nose rings, tattoos, none of which he was opposed to, but it generally reflected their traumatic upbringing. He went in search of.

Cody blindly followed, as he needed a point of reference after the three Gin and Tonics he had already consumed. He was still pissed off about being cut off two weeks earlier. "Nobody cuts me off as long as I'm still standing!" he had screamed at the bartender, which got him knocked to the

floor by one of the roided out jock dickhead bouncers who kept the moshpit sterile for the frat boys. They all hated frat boys. Blind followers of fashion without so much as a compass. Elitist pricks without any reason to feel superior, except for the constant reinforcement of getting laid by slutty sorority broads, who justify their existence by getting drunk and holding "charity" events. Fuck them all. They walk in single file across the bridge, over the river of conformity, and into the burning fires of corporate hell. Bow down before the one you serve, you're going to get what you deserve! Read some fucking Emerson.

Gil plotted his trajectory and blasted off into the crowded club. Fortunately there were plenty of places to refuel along the treacherous voyage. They took full advantage of the pits stops, gassing up, like they were halfway between Hatch and Deming, New Mexico at the Middle of Nowhere Bar. They would need lots of fuel to make the last 400 miles into Tucson. You hit the Arizona border and think you're there, when you see the sign that says 275 miles to go. It will make you shit your pants every time. What a fucking letdown. There is that one cool stretch of those big round rocks, Texas Canyon, where you can stop, have a smoke, maybe a warm beer that got lost under the seat, has a little fuzz on the lid, but at this point you would almost drink Budweiser. I said almost. So you crack open your new found treasure, which certainly is Coors, and split it with your buddy. The two of you are starting to smell pretty ripe, because it's early May, and the desert has begun it's 4 month journey into the hundred degree range, but you press on, knowing there is pot at the end of the rainbow. Good stuff too, straight out of Nogales. Upon arrival you take a few drags, get so hungry that you eat for 9 hours solid, fall asleep, chill out for a day or two, then it's time to head back to Denver. The same fucking trip, this time you get prepared. Armed with a fresh 12 pack, and a couple of lenyos that your buddy rolled you, you head back toward cattle country. "I'll have a bourbon and coke" Gil requested.

Cody chimed in, "Make mine a Seven and Seven."

Feeling good enough for another lap, they set out across the sea of people, like fifteenth century explorers Ferdinand Magellan and Vasco DaGama. Though they never actually explored together, tonight they would. Around the Cape of Good Tunes, through the Straits of Urination, where the Banshees (sans Siouxsie) could be heard wailing to the passing sailors, and back to their favorite seats, next to Sharon's bar. That's when Ron walked on the scene.

Ron, in his tie dye, sporting the crystal neckalace he made, wearing Birkenstocks, and smoking an American Spirit cigarette. He was ready to party! With a half baked look in his eye, "Hey, what's up?"

"Oh, Gil is bummed out because his dream girl skipped off with some hardcore lookin' White Zombie type." Cody revealed.

Ron tried to bring up the mood, "Come on dude, there are a million girls here tonight, let's go bug 'em."

Gil explained, "You don't understand, Deidre was the one. The last best bite of a burrito supreme, the first smoke of the morning, the mist that comes out of a flip-top bottle of Grolsch when you first open it that you try to breathe in for a little something extra, the..."

"Alright dude, I get the point." asserted Ron.

"I need another drink." Gil stated, and the others agreed.

## Chapter 6

### Castration

Looking less like Led Zeppelin's front man circa 1972 and more like Dean Martin in Cannonball Run, Gil found things getting pretty surreal. He was in the middle of a bad Salvador Dali painting, which is actually anything that no-talent beatoff ever did. Any fucking guy who paints a portrait of his hand in gratitude for whacking his meat so thoroughly, deserves to be castrated. Not just surgically, but publicly, so that he will be an example for the rest of humanity, chill out, quit playing with yourself, what the hell is wrong with you! Gil was getting sloppy.

He grabbed the next girl who walked by, who fortunately was female, and relatively attractive, and went dancing. He was moving like one of those electric flower pots where the flower is wearing Ray-Bans and is playing a Les Paul Gold Top 24-fret sunburst with a custom Bigsby tremolo system. Why anyone would ruin such a cherry guitar with a fucked up whammy bar like that is beyond me, but Gil figured he was looking pretty cool. Cody spotted the dude with the nose ring.

"Hey, Gil! There he is!" Cody bellowed, pointing at a cat who resembled a buff Perry Farrell, "That's the dude who grabbed Deidre!"

Gil wasn't afraid of Perry Farrell, but years of substance abuse tend to take the fight out of pretty much anyone. Unfortunately, this wasn't Perry. It wasn't even the singer from White Lion, this dude was huge. Jim Croce could have made a whole fucking album about this guy. Gil summoned up all of the liquid courage he had and approached the beast.

"Hey man, do you know Deidre?" he specifically inquired.

"Who the fuck is asking?" growled the beast.

"Someone said they saw you drag her off the dance floor, but I have to find her 'cause she wants me." Gil boasted, which was not the best idea he had ever had, because it really rubbed the beast the wrong way.

The beast becoming visibly angered, "What the fuck would she want with a pinhead like you?"

Gil responded in his most foolhardy way, "I suppose she got tired of your fucking raisin dick, and wanted to bat in the majors."

The beast swung first, landing a right on Gil's goiter. The goiter is one of the most vulnerable spots on the body, second only to the nuts, which is specifically where Gil aimed. This stopped the beast in his big ass tracks like you would stop smoking if you could see an x-ray of your lungs, like you would stop talking to a guy like Ed if he screwed one of your girlfriends, even after you asked him to just send her home because she was going over to his house to piss you off, and even though she was fucking crazy and tripping all the time, it's just the principle, you don't fuck a buddy's girl! The beast hit the turf. Gil, now restrained by Meat and Potato the two bouncer morons, was escorted to the door. He was pretty upset, but felt lucky to only have sustained one crushing blow, when one of those little twists you knew was coming occurred.

Sitting on the hood of his fine american steel, crying her eyes out, was Deidre. Gil thought she made a nice hood ornament, a lot better than Tawny Kitean in that Whitesnake video, although he wouldn't kick Tawny out of bed for snoring, in fact he would give her a dutch oven. Fart like a big dog and pull the covers over that pretty red hair until Tawny woke up. "What the fuck is that smell?" she would scream. "Oh, that came out of my ass" he smugly replies. She would be pretty pissed off, but then, realizing she was with Monsieur Plant's long lost twin

brother, they would hump like rabbits that had been in a sex deprivation experiment, and finally had the surgical tape removed from their shaved privates. Sadistic, cruel, inhumane, all in the name of safer cosmetics. She cried like the white rabbit who just had the latest fragrance from Obsession sprayed in it's burning pink eyes.

"What's wrong?", Gil had to know.

She collected herself, "That asshole won't stop following me!

I thought I left him behind in Cheyenne, but he moved here to keep an eye on me, and the worst thing about it is, he's rich. He can afford to hang out all day outside of the school, until I get off, follow me home, leave presents, as if we are going to ever get back together, and call me ten times a day."

"Well I just dropped him like you would drop a baby if it peed all over you when you were holding it." Gil bragged.

"Oh, fuck, we had better get out of here! He carries a knife!" pleaded Deidre.

"What about Cody and Ed? I'll run in and grab them, then we'll head out"

"Hurry, and be careful" said the most beautiful girl in the parking lot.

Gil entered the club, and went down to where he knew there was a 90 percent chance his buddies were. He saw Cody who enumerated, "Ed went home with that pig."

"We have to get out of here man, that dude has a knife." Gil hurriedly stated, while non-verbally suggesting imminent danger.

"I saw them throw him out the back door right after they took you out the front."

Gil, now worried, "Oh, shit, I left Deidre out there by herself!"

They forced their way through the crowd, passing Steven, Ray and Ron, who were all doing Bloody Brains shots at Sharon's bar together, up the stairs and out the front door. It was just as he had feared. Deidre was gone.

## Chapter 7

### Sedation

Meandering back into the bar, where the bouncer's, intelligent as they obviously were, seemed to forget that they had recently 86'd Gil, they decided it was time to drink. Not just drink, as in I'll have a shot of tequila, drink as in give me the fucking bottle, drink! After a couple more drinks, this is what probably happened to Gil, as there were no witnesses sober enough to corroborate the following testimony.

Any number of mixed drinks, likely Stoli Gimlets, Southern Comfort shots, a couple of Coors Light drafts, and probably some Sauza. Dancing with unknown females, a few phone numbers, repeated, not written down, and forgotten. Requests to the D.J., never filled. One occurrence of the protest dance, where they all formed a big circle on the floor and didn't move, until the fuckhead spinning the records played something they wanted. Moshing to Rage Against The Machine, singing along to the hook. Drove Cody home, missing a limited number of red lights, and back to the apartment. Once inside he felt thirsty again, discovering a beer left from the previous evening, he picked it up, and pondered it's original owner. The half full room temperature beer melted in his hand, so he set it back on the nightstand and fell quickly asleep...

Sunlight! He was awakened by a slow purring noise in his right ear, the same one that had been bloodied by the 5,000 watt sound system at the club. Who was making this noise? Was it the neighbor's cat, a stray bimbo, a 50 cycle hum from the sub-woofers? He hesitated, startled and confused...thank God it was only the telephone. "What?", he belched into the grated end of this utensil that had the nerve to disturb his rest.

"Hey man, I'm in trouble, can you come and snag me?" the receiver responded.

It took a moment to place the voice, but it could only be Rudy. The same fucking guy who puked all over the stool last Friday. What the hell did he do this time?

"Hey are you there man?" the nervous receiver chortled.

"Yeah, where the fuck are you, I'm hung bad man, I don't ever remember driving home last night."

Rudy explained that he had been picked up by a state trooper on Highway 93 coming back from Boulder. He hadn't even been drinking last night, because he still felt like he had alcohol poisoning from the previous week's festivities, but the cop didn't like his attitude. Suddenly the walls began to move. This wasn't like the bedspins he had grown used to, and actually fond of in a self-destructive sort of way, this was fucking weird.

He dropped the phone into the pile of clothes next to his dresser. It seemed to create a trailing pattern on it's slow-motion trip to the floor. His arms felt like they were 400 pounds each, and his feet were two snowboards screaming down Pavalachini. The ground met him in a big hurry, face first, his nose bursting like that fucking kid who stuck his thumb in that dam in the Netherlands. "What an asshole" he thought, "how long did that fucker think he could stand there?" This was all becoming quickly irrelevant, as he thought this might just be the end. You know, the end. That so-called destination at the other side of the spectrum from what we refer to as the beginning. Which is precisely 180 degrees from where he was certainly on his way.

Death, was it what he feared it would be, an eternity of the consciousness that you were a complete fuck-up in the little time that you were allotted on that chuck of polluted shit that revolved around that giant fart that had been lit from

the asshole of some higher source. Or would it be like in the movies, with an old dude with a cool ZZ Top beard, and the power to do any fucking thing he pleases. Yeah right. No it wasn't death at all, this was more like giving birth.

He puked so suddenly and violently that it actually stuck to the wall, and didn't slide down. Next came the really scary shit. Blood poured out of his stomach into his esophagus. Puking like he was in some sort of a contest, or the act at the very end of the carnival midway, for the people with one coupon left, and this is the only attraction that costs 1. See they only sell them in multiples of 5, and if you didn't want to piss it away on a hotdog that looked like the penis from an egyptian sarcophagus, you had to see this dude puke blood. How did he pull it off night after night?

This too become suddenly, yet profoundly irrelevant, as the purging ceased...Colors, beaming into his retina began to evolve into a whole new region. They would overlap into his other senses, of which he had so many now, he could hardly keep track. Red tasted like smoked herring fillets in Dijon mustard sauce, and beige sounded like a sputtering plane engine on it's way into the side of a mountain. Cancel my subscription to "High Times" he murmured, as the pain set in.

Not just any old pain, the kind of pain you would expect Satan himself to dish out if you called him a prick. I mean pain that only prisoners of war can begin to estimate. Tearing the human spirit to the threshold of existence, yet being spared only to go through it again when those sadistic bastards want to take out their insecurities on you.

"Oh sorry dude, I dropped the phone."

"Man, I heard you chow, are you gonna make it", Rudy inquired.

"Yeah it's cool, I just need some fucking Motrin."

"Well I seriously need you to come get me, I'm fucked, and they want \$134 to let my ass out of here.", becoming more insistent with every passing syllable which left his parched lips, Rudy could only dream of what a glass of ice water would be like at this point, orange juice was like something that Ricardo Montalbon would have Tattoo bring you if you had the cash to live some Yuppie fantasy on this bullshit island that Lorimar wants you to escape to, and watch which products are on sale this week at Kmart. Price and Item TV, that's all I need is a bag of circus peanuts and a curling iron. Why am I sitting on the sofa watching this shit. Like I don't know that the story is going to resolve by 9:00. FUCK YOU YOU FUCKING ANNOYING SPANISH FUCK, AND YOUR SHIT LITTLE SLAVE BOY MIDGET PUSSY SERVANT. I'll bet he butts him during commercials.

"Alright, where are you?"

"I'm in Arvada, at the Police station on Ralston Road.", Rudy explained.

"Give me an hour or so, I'll be there."

"Thanks man, don't forget to grab some cash for bail."

Hanging up the phone, "Whatever, later."

He clicked on the tube to try to resolve the infighting between his equilibrium and intestinal tract. It didn't happen, but it was just the dry heaves. You know, those little hiccups of hydrochloric acid that pop onto your palette when you least expect it, while you patiently wait for the big one. Need liquids.

Carefully avoiding his previous nights Taco Bell, which the dog was eating as if it was going to get up and run away if he hesitated for even a moment, Shotzy seemed to prefer that it was in liquid form, requiring less effort to ingest, he made his way to the refrigerator. Spasm! "Cool I'm OK."

Apple Juice or Milk? Apple Juice or Italian Dressing?  
Italian Dressing or Ice Water? Italian Dressing or Milk?  
Milk.

Family Feud came on, with this year's Playmates going against the stars from Days of Our Lives. With a careful aim, he hit the power switch with his boot that he found on the counter. Tunes.

Nirvana or Smashing Pumpkins? Nirvana or Body Count? That's an easy one.

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD MUTHA FUCKA!!!

Time to get dressed. Sandals, shirt, shorts. "Oh fuck I puked all over my clothes." Man?!

Fortunately a couple of articles were spared from the eruption of burrito and blood. They had been on top of the hood of the fish tank which smelled like the waste treatment plant on South Santa Fe Drive on a hot day with unseasonably high humidity and a favorable wind from the northwest. What, did everyone eat that fucking Taco Bell last night and get the turbo dumps this morning or does it just smell like a circus elephant bunghole because I'm hung over? I think I'll wear my environmental shirt today.

The keys. Where did I put the keys. As if by asking himself enough times, and with enough force of action he could scare the invisible self that knows where those keys are into breaking down like a schoolgirl that just got hit by a rock thrown by that Bobby Melchior jerk and telling. I think I left them in the ignition. Lock the door, get in the car (still unlocked, though fortunately not running), put in drive, depress accelerator, I mean how bummed out can a car part be, does it feel used, under-appreciated, fuck him, I've got places to go and he's not going anywhere. Take a right, concentrate, this is not easy. I should've taken

more pain killers. All of these thoughts rambled through his head like a drunk on a walk home from a bar, home is where the cops don't harass you when you are trying to catch some Z's. Home is right past this picture of the Crow on the label. Home is a sunny day, where you don't wish that you were dead. Home is when someone actually gives you more than a quarter, and you might be able to get some canned sausage from 7-11. Home is what is on TV in the storefront, why do they have to shut them off at 10 when they close, don't they know we need to know what's going on in the world, just because we don't have a roof over our head doesn't make us fucking non-existent.

Empathy was one of his redeeming qualities. "FUCK YOU BUDDY I'LL FUCKING TWIST YOUR FUCKING SKULL OFF!" he screamed as a 1978 Dodge Challenger cut him off. Who the fuck would buy a hunk of shit like that? Yeah buy American and watch the piece of shit fall apart right before your eyes. It's still running! Probably the only one left.

When is this town going to get a decent radio station. All of this thirysomething phony pseudo-alternative foddy-dodder. Just one, even AM, I'll listen to AM. It hasn't been the same since Z-Rock went off the air. The only other station keeps telling me they want to kick my ass. How is a radio station going to kick my ass? Good fucking luck. Those DJ's are about the unhealthiest motherfuckers on the planet. Sit in the dark all day, eating Entenmann's, smoking KOOL Filter Kings. MMMM the smoke that refreshes. A smoke once in a while when your drinking is no big deal, but buying them by the carton, sitting in a box and just fucking filling your lungs with carcinogens, and your gut with sucrose, give me a fucking break, just put a gun to your head and get it over with, isn't it better to burn out than to rust. You rusty radio flaming pudknocker twinkie eating (TWINKIE is a registered trademark of Hostess Inc. and is only used here as a superlative metaphor and is not meant to demean that historic product in any way) son of a bitch! Bring it on! Maybe I'll pop in a tape.

I wonder how Rudy is doing, any big split tooth trying to get busy with him yet, or are those fucking cops beating him senseless because he has a goatee. I wish I felt so incredibly fucking inadequate, that I had to get a job where I could have my friends hold someone down and kick the shit out of them, and get a fucking check at the end of the week for it.

Here's Ralston Road, take a left. There's his car, oh man, how did that dent get in the side he pondered. "That'll be \$134 and he has a court date on April 16." the attendant smugly stated.

"Hey man I can't thank you enough" Rudy sincerely acknowledged.

"Don't worry about it, your car is kind of trashed."

"Yeah, that was from the guardrail, I'll explain some other time, I've got to go home and get some shuteye" Rudy explained as he started the engine.

"Take it easy"

I need some food, he thought. His stomach felt like it had been scraped with one of those steel scrub brushes that you use to get paint off a car with, or wear down the Bondo after some body work, before you move up to the sandpaper. I never was very good at body work. This girl actually let me try to do some on her car and I totally fucked it up, and she never said thanks, but she didn't seem too pissed either. It almost looked worse, because when then dents were pulled out, there were like three little dents instead of one big one. He recalled how stupid he felt when she came to pick it up, and sheepishly said, "Well, Um, That's all I could do without the right tools."

Thoughts of Deidre crossed his mind, between cramps, stinging from battery acid like pockets of vomit in his mouth and the blue-grey dent on his goiter.

Hamburger Stand was sounding better and better, there was one on Broadway, by the Gothic theater. He imagined the lifestyle of a cow as he passed the rural stretch of Ralston Road. How nice it would be to eat grass all day (imagining that grass must taste pretty good if you're a cow, or they probably wouldn't base their whole fucking existence on it), and just fuck other cows, sleep standing up, then becoming the primary ingredient in someone's dinner. Except for the death part, which is inevitable anyhow, it seems like a pretty enviable profession to be a cow. But then there's veal. Those poor bastards, not a chance. They are like the crack babies of the Bovine genus. Fucked from birth, practically stillborn, but kept alive by the miracle of modern medicine only to have half a brain, and none of a life.

"Welcome to Hamburger Stand may I take your order?" the speaker demanded.

"Yeah, I'll have 5 hamburgers, a large fry and a medium Mountain Dew" he responded without missing a beat.

"That'll be \$4.28, please pull forward."

It tasted like heaven after all he had been through this day.

His little piece of heaven was thanks to a noble cow that had been shot, cut into hundreds of pieces, ground until unrecognizable, except by the unmistakable consistency and color of beef, smashed into patties, and grilled alongside her sisters and brothers until a deep grey color. Why does catsup taste so good on there he wondered aloud. You couldn't pay a cow to munch on a tomato.

I'd better get back home before that dog shits all over the apartment. Why would I get a wiener dog. You might as well

have a fucking raccoon or something. What a useless waste of life. How does the wiener dog fit into the food chain. They probably taste like shit. Any stupid carnivore could round up several hundred in an afternoon of hunting, and invite all of his friends over for a cookout, without even breaking a sweat. I thought the animals from the old days were super pissed off with big ass teeth. How the hell did this one climb up the evolutionary ladder. He must've had a little help from a higher authority. Someone who was sentimental to the underdog. Speaking of cartoon dogs, even though Astro was a dumbshit, I'd take him over Dino any day of the week. Dino knocked Fred on his ass ever time he walked through the door, you never saw Astro pull that shit.

Id've had Dino sent to the pound or something, he really sucked. Pulling slowly into the driveway, he forgot completely what he was just thinking about. It wasn't due to the hangover, but the gorgeous girl who was moving into the apartment downstairs and to the right. WOW. He knew better than to let her see him like this, first impressions and all, so he waited until she brought an armload in.

"Excuse me" he heard as he turned the key.

"Excuse me", this time he knew he couldn't play dumb.

"Hi, my name is Terri, I'm your new neighbor." What kind of fucked up luck is this, he thought, first I lose my dream girl, and now I'm blowing my only chance with this one. Should he try to play it cool, or apologize for the way he looks, sounds and smells, or should he say a quick hello and bolt into his apartment?

"Hey, what's up" he mumbled.

She had a confused look on her face, like "no guy has ever been this rude to me right off the bat, they usually flip for my fine form." He was pretty sick of chicks at this point. Knowing there would be other chance encounters with her, he went back inside. Shotzy had the runs. The smell

was something out of a novelty shop, which they would only sell to people over 18 because it was so fucking extreme. Rotten eggs mixed with garlic and scotch. Holy shit. Opening the windows he settled on the couch for a little Saved By The Bell. Wow, all this and it isn't even 11:00 yet.

Hair. How the hell did all of this hair get on the sofa. That dog doesn't have hair like this, but it can't be mine. I'm only 25 I'm not going bald. He screamed internally, so loud that he nearly popped his liver. Bald like the electroplating on the bottom of a cheap teflon frying pan from Target, the one that comes in the set with the 4 quart cooker and the sauce pan, in designer colors for those with no creativity, or sense of composition. Fortunately they also have matching shower curtains which he picked out to accent the bathroom trash can which still had Rudy written all over it. Puke, his whole world was becoming puke. Puke on the wall, puke on the floor, puke in the stall, puke on the door. There seemed to be a theme developing when the Hamburger Stand made it's stand. He nearly swallowed his tongue from the taste that was not so slowly filling his oral cavern. This was a taste he would have to go to chemistry school for years to duplicate. The kind of taste that paint thinner and pork fat mixed with a healthy dose of dead skin could only aspire to be. Cook them in a broth of stagnant mosquito filled pond water and very very old cat litter and you will begin to get the idea. The kind of taste that you wouldn't wish on a meter maid, even after she gives you a ticket, when you just had to run in and cash a check, and you didn't have any change, tried to be reasonable with her, but she still says "Maybe next time you'll learn", you still wouldn't want her to taste something like this. Was pure raw bile being forced into his mouth like a fuel injected rotary engine from an RX-7, doing fifty in first gear? Would it ever end, or is this hell. Did the devil park his dumptruck full of bad fucking luck on his existence, or should he have skipped those shots that Deidre bought him last night?

Purgatory, that's where he was. He convinced himself this must be purgatory. You know the place where you go to pay for your sins, but they only pay minimum wage, and you have no education because your dad was a drunk and beat the piss out of your mom, and you just stayed the hell out of the house, or you knew that you would get a lickin' too. How long would he be here, he wondered without fear. He knew that it wasn't forever, and whenever there was a goal in sight, he could kind of tune out whatever bad things were happening at the moment. Brush the teeth.

Fumbling for a toothbrush, he felt a small, but equally creepy cockroach run over his hand. It had been having a party on the bristles. Was my spit that tasty? I'll give it a lifetime supply if it wants to come back for seconds, motherfucking roach. He rinsed the device with hot water for 44 seconds, until he felt it was thoroughly sterile. Brush Brush Brush. No thoughts entered his mind for the next three minutes.

Time's up. Spit, Rinse, Spit, Rinse, Spit. The ritual. Exiting the water closet, his open toed sandals decided they were deserving of some quality playing time (QPT). Crunch, there went the toenail. Right into the wall, and off it came. It wasn't that it hurt so much as the feeling of stupidity that engulfed him. It was as if he had been suffocated by the big indian in Cuckoo's Nest for just long enough to put his mind in neutral and nail the wall with his little piggies. AW FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUUUUUUUCK! Back to the couch. Click Click Click, good thing I don't have cable, I'd never get up.

Right on, exercise with hot chicks on KWGN. Not like he wanted to get in shape, he just reinforced his own laziness by seeing impossibly built people doing things he had

neither the time nor motivation to do. Bodies that were carved from butter covered slabs of granite, nubile yet rock hard, soft to the touch, but as inflexible as a section of PVC Piping. Boy, how do you meet girls like that? You don't, at least not a pot bellied smelly puking fuck like you, his alterconscience chimed in. Click Click Click. Off. No more TV for me.

There was that buzzing noise again, he picked up the phone. It was his ex-girlfriend wanting him to help her move some stuff to storage, and she COULDN'T WAIT ANOTHER MINUTE TO DO IT. Slow the fuck down he thought to himself, but said, "Yeah, no problem".

He considered calling Ed and Cody, but knew they would be asleep until well after 2. He sat very still, so as not to disturb his system, which was walking a tightrope over the Royal Puke Gorge. One false move, and back to the porcelain food recycling station.

About an hour later Lauren came by, after obviously taking the full amount of time to get ready, just to make him jealous, or to feel stupid for breaking up, even though she broke up with him, the nerve of this chick. He spoke, "You look nice".

"What the hell have you been doing?" she asked in a very impolite tone, "and what is that smell?" Here nose nearly bled from the stink that enveloped her cranial sector. "AUUGH!", her mouth exploded as if there was an M-80 in her belly, right underneath her breakfast, which ironically had been instant oatmeal, whose flying properties, though not scientifically tested, are widely assumed to be the most efficient of any food projectile. He ducked just in time to see Shotzy catch one of the orbular chunks in his most graceful wiener dog fashion, right in the yapper. This made her become violently, almost strangulatorily ill. All over her dolphin shorts, which were up until this moment giving

him a woodrow wilson, and on the floor to join the rest of the party.

"Let me get you a towel." he suggested as she ran into the bathroom. A very powerful feeling grasped her sweating body, the feeling of terror. Would this ever end, the smell, the smell, the smell! She described it in her mind's nose in those relative adjectives, based upon her life experience, which most closely resembled the odor, yet like him, she couldn't not mix a foul enough concoction to do it justice. She tried anyway: Nail polish remover mixed with ammonia, slow brewed with the puss from that infection she had when she was two, that rotted so bad she nearly lost her foot, concentrated and focused into a fine mist which would have to be administered to her head in place of oxygen, by taking deep guttural breaths from a paper bag laced with the mixture. "No", she thought, "I'll take the bag".

He felt all of this excitement starting to take it's toll. They laid down on his bed together, after she had thoroughly brushed and washed up. He didn't have the heart, nor the cleaning supplies to tell her about the roach. They drifted off into la-la land and began to dream. Although very rare, people in extremely close proximity, and under similar duress have been know to share dreams, ironically this is exactly what occurred.

Hell is nice this time of year, Satan actually plants flowers at the entrance, they don't last long, but he seems to have an endless supply. They weren't specifically in hell, probably one of the suburbs, but by both of their accounts, earth based suburbs were only one or two notches above a mythical hell. So they're in hell and this mean looking monsterish thing runs up to scare them, but they aren't scared. This aggravates the monster who suddenly turns into a sheep. They were now in heaven. Somehow by not showing fear, they escaped hell and were in heaven. Mellow and enchanting and pleasant and peaceful, this was the place for

the today. They wished they could've stayed, but it's never like that with dreams.

Waking up, they were wrapped in each others arms. Normally both would have been quite pleased by this, but on this occasion, with the smell and all, it was more of some kind of sick psychological experiment, like that prick who tricked his chickens into freaking out when he would hit this buzzer by reinforcing it with electrical shocks through the bottom of the cage. All in the name of science he thought. Someone was fucking with him today. Could there have been a spirit in the alcohol he consumed, or was it just one of those cyclical periods of statistical aberrations of such intensely bad luck that you know that more is on the way. No, he realized, he just overdid it.

"Bye, I'll come over some other time", she said on her way out the door.

"See ya"

Finally he could get some rest. He went back to his bed and laid down. The sun was beaming in between the shade and the wall. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't block out all of the sun. This made sleeping during the day very difficult, and when he felt like this, it was entirely impossible.

Rising from his hopeless attempt at slumber, he went to the bathroom for more Motrin, but when he got there, the fucking cupboard was bare. Remembering he had some in his jacket, in one of those convenience packs of two that you can get at Circle K. The jacket was still in his car. Stepping outside into the heat of the day, the sun temporarily blinded him. He made it to the beige beauty and opened the door. There, on the passenger seat under his black warmth provider was Deidre's phone number!

## Chapter 8

### Explanation

She must have written it down for him when she saw the beast coming. Should he call right away, or be mellow. He waited a full 9 seconds before dialing. Ring ring ring ring ring ring Click.

No answer, so he called Cody. Ring ring "Hello", Cody's pained voice on the other end cried.

"You'll never guess what I just found." Gil quizzed.

"Your pussy, it was there right behind your dick for years, and you just found it!" Cody sarcasted.

Never letting a putdown go unretorted, Gil stated "No man, your pussy, you left it in the soap dish next to my mouthwash. Were you trying to rinse the Chlamitiya off of it or what?"

Cody, seemingly unphased by the brutal personal attack he had just sustained, "What the fuck do you want, it's early man, I need to sleep."

"Deidre left her number in my car, but she isn't home."

"No way, well, call me back when something important happens" Cody reassured as he ended his portion of the communication.

Gil was nervous, yet excited by the prospect of seeing his soulmate again. Something inside him told him that there needed to be a little foreshadowing here, but he was no psychic, so he made no assumptions about what would happen next. If he would've known what was to come, he would have disconnected the phone and gone back to sleep. No such luck.

This time it was Steven. Ring, "Hello"

"Hey man, what happened to you last night, you were a mess!" Steven gleefully exclaimed. Steven always woke up at the crack of dawn, and was actually calling pretty late in the day, he usually liked to start Gil's day off on the wrong foot by waking him up.

Gil, summoning up his balance, and evening out his train of thought, "Well, I made it home didn't I?"

"I just thought I should tell you, I just saw that girl you were with last night at King Soopers, and she didn't look too good."

"No way, don't fuck with me, I'm not in the mood." said Gil.

"Seriously. She had some bad bruises on her face and was buying hydrogen peroxide and ice."

Gil inquired, "The King Soopers by your house?"

"Yeah man, like 5 minutes ago, I felt weird, so I didn't say anything, and she was just sort of looking at the tile."

"I've gotta go." Gil said, as he tossed the phone aside.

He hopped into the driver's seat, peeled out of the driveway, and sped down the road toward destiny. Destiny. Destiny. He knew this could alter his very existence. Those movies like Back To The Future have it all wrong. The slightest little change in the past would have such sweeping repercussions, that 99 percent of people who were conceived after the ripple in time caused by someone going back and interfering wouldn't even exist, and the 1 percent that did were just lucky enough, or isolated enough from the epicenter of the incident, that they slipped under the wire. 1 sperm out of 100,000 meets the egg and actually gets any. Even the slightest change in timing would put another sperm

in first place, as they are constantly doing laps around Señor's Coulyones. Tell me you can go back, save McFly's ass, and still be born. Never, absolutely never. Gil was fully cognizant of the fact that every little detail of his life affected not just his outcome, but the outcome of the BIG GAME. No man is an island? No man is even a separate stalk of corn in the field. Everyone is like part of a screen that you accidentally knocked out of your parents bedroom window when you were 5 and couldn't get back in place. When you poke a pen through the mesh, it fucks up the whole thing, and if you bend it, then it will never be perfectly flat again. Gil knew that he had better hurry, because the sooner you start the good things happening, the sooner really cool stuff will occur.

King Soopers was only 6 minutes away. Speeding through the parking lot, he nearly crushed a Persian cat that had the audacity to be in the way, unfortunately he missed. He double parked, closed the car door authoritatively and jogged to the entrance. "Would you like to buy some girl scout cookies?" an innocent voice asked.

"Only if you give me your phone number so we can go out sometime" Gil quipped, not having lost his sense of humor, even after losing his dinner. Her mother blurted out some pointless Yuppie insult, which caused the green clad cookie pusher to burst into tears. Gil laughed hysterically, and nearly ran right over the girl of his fancy.

"Deidre!" Gil shouted.

Caught way, totally, entirely, and completely off guard, Deidre, thinking very carefully, erupted, "What the hell are you doing here?"

"I came to find you. Steven said he saw you here." As he said this, his words slowed down and trailed off, startled as if he had seen 666 tattooed on her scalp, he stood in place and just stared. Her face looked like a rubber mask

you would wear on halloween, except her eye was still in the socket, and she wasn't actually cut, but she looked like total shit. Gil put his arms around her, and she did the same. Tears leaked out of her swollen eyes for a moment, until she caught a whiff of Gil.

"Jesus, did you get sick all over yourself?"

"Kind of"

"Kind of! I've smelled fresher Port-O-Lets at the National Western Stock Show."

Stopping the conversation from going any further in his direction he asked, "Where is he?"

Trying to stall, but knowing that he wouldn't allow it she responded, "Back at my place, and he is pretty pissed. You shouldn't have racked him. He had a pathetic enough unit as it was, now it won't even function. He said that if I don't go back to Cheyenne with him, he will make my life so miserable here, that I will be begging him to take me back. That fucking sick motherfucker. I can't get away from him. He beat me up. He swore he would never hurt me before, and now he just hauls off and smacks me around. I'm scared."

Gil, furious and impatient, "He's going down, come with me."

Deidre followed Gil to his car, walking slowly, but consistently, unlike Gil who kept accelerating and decelerating alternately, trying to pick up the pace, but being courteous at the same time. They went back to Gil's house to try to refresh themselves, but found it entirely unbearable due to the piles of half-digested food on the high shag. Shotzy hadn't been doing very well either, but he would have to wait.

They traveled over to Cody and Ed's who, fortunately, were awake now. Cody freaked out when he saw Deidre's face, but

mellowed out when she began to get upset. Ed, coming off a night at the old KOA campground, you know with a girl who was convenient after you have been on the road all night and you just want to get some rest. You wake up in the morning with weird spots and welts all over you, and you don't know it they are from her or the mosquitoes that have been fucking all night in the stale water next to your site. You rub a little lanolin on your skin, tell her to hit the bricks, get back in your car and head on down the highway, never looking back.

Ed didn't seem too proud or too bummed out, just kind of neutral about the situation. "Did you guys sleep here last night?" Ed unknowingly inquired.

Gil taking the initiative for a still rattled Deidre, "No, I made it home somehow, but that Jane's Addiction dude beat the piss out of Deidre and he's sitting over at her house while we speak. We have to go over there and get this fuck. He told her he won't leave her alone until she comes back to him."

"Fuck him man" Cody snorted "Let's go kick his teeth in!"

Ed, wiping his nose on his shirt, "Let's do it, I haven't been in a good brawl in a while."

"Pile in, were out of here" Gil said as they headed to the door.

Deidre spoke, "Wait." A uniform halt, as they hung on her every sound "There is something you guys need to know about me."

## Chapter 9

### Realization

Why was everything so damn complicated. He could never just meet a normal girl, hang out, get along, and just be regular. There was always something to muck up the works. He prepared himself for the inevitable in his mind. In the space of two seconds he considered a number of possible permutations of consequence that she could emit. Some examples were: she was married to the beast; she was pregnant by the beast; she was in a cult and the beast was the leader; the beast was her older brother, the beast was an escaped convict hell bent on revenge... nothing could have prepared him for the next words out of her swollen lips.

"Kyle, the guy you kicked in the balls, he's...my...dealer. I need him. I've tried to get away, but he is the only one that can give me what I need. He got me hooked when I was 18, and now it's 3 years later and I can't live without him. It started real innocent, just a little something to relax you after a hectic day, then you start taking them on weekends for kicks, maybe with a few drinks to wash them down, pretty soon you don't even catch a buzz unless you pop 6 or 7. If you stop taking them, the pain is unbearable. Kyle invented them. He blends two or three prescriptions together, then adds some other shit, puts them back in the capsules and sells them. He calls them Rivets. There isn't any treatment center for them, because hardly anyone that doesn't know Kyle has ever heard of them. What am I gonna do?"

Gil's mind was dancing with the Queen of France in the Grand Ballroom around 1791, right before the Revolution. Everyone in the room had heard the rumors of the peasant uprising, but chose to ignore those subtle little warning signs, like "Helter Skelter" painted on the front door of the castle. They all just danced the night away, oblivious to what was

about to go down. The fruitcake in the powdered wig comes by and offers you some kind of hors d'oeuvre which you taste, hey, it's free. It's pretty good, and you think you could get used to this kind of living when you see the draperies go up in flames. The whole inside of the room is on fire. Everybody is running, but there is no way out but the main gate. Upon exiting, you notice the guillotine has already been erected. They point to you, but you attempt to defend yourself, explaining fervently that you were only a guest, and were not royalty. They don't care, they want to see some death tonight. They put the hood over you and escort you to the headstock which has a thick piece of dull, cold, battleship grey steel suspended over it. "Can we call the police?"

"No, I let him make the stuff in my house. I would go to jail for years if they caught me."

Sweat formed in Gil's already putrid underarms. "Fucking great, a junkie, just what I had in mind. HAS THIS WORLD GONE COMPLETELY INSANE?" You are so fucking beautiful, and so fucked in the head. What's your trip? I fucking love you, and now you are twisting my head off with all of this static. If I wanted static I'd switch my TV on channel 99! How bad can the pain be?"

"Steer clear of short hairs, steer clear of short hairs..." Ed's ominous warning, that Gil had heard so many times over the years were jammed in a small ball in his frontal lobe now, demanding from the other parts of the brain an "I told you so."

"Imagine having to eat a ball of tangled galvanized 4 inch wood nails, held together with caulking, then follow that with a spin on the paint shaker for your head, slam a couple of shots of roofing tar, then throw yourself off of the top of a shed onto an overturned edger with the throttle taped wide open." Deidre had obviously thought about this in the

past, and had also worked in a hardware store. Gil's words finally made the transition from sound to understanding, "Did you say you love me?"

"Fuck yeah I fucking love the shit out of you! I have never been so fucking in love in my whole entire fucking life! Fuck, you piss me off."

Deidre exhaled, "That's soo sweet!" She walked over to the reeking Gil and pressed her bruised smackers right against his chapped trap. It was fucking glorious. Even Cody and Ed, who were generally stoic in the face of emotion, gave each other the kind of high five that was usually reserved for when the Broncos scored, and you think they actually have a chance of finally winning the Super Bowl. But just like in 1989, Joe Montana hadn't touched the ball yet.

Knock knock. Cody went to the door. Standing there with an illegal smile on his face was Ron. He hadn't slept, but that didn't seem to bother him. He actually looked healthier than anyone else in the condo at this point. "Who's ready for some hits?"

He didn't mean he wanted to get in a hook, he wanted to get high. They all seemed to be in the mood, so they sat down at the kitchen table. Ron rolled a fat log, which they passed around two and a half times before it was too small to tweeze any more. Feeling much more relaxed, they began to develop a strategy.

## Chapter 10

### Rumination

Cody spoke first, "I say we still just go and beat the livin' shit out of this dude. Look, there are four of us and only one of him."

"If we do that, we had better kill him, because he *will* get us all back. I really don't want to spend the rest of my life in jail for murder." Ed was being the voice of reason.

"We need to trick him into getting himself busted." Ron invented.

"How the hell are we going to do that, and still keep Deidre's hands clean?" Gil asked.

Deidre, becoming nervous at the prospect "I need that stuff. I have to get a bunch before you guys do anything to him. I think I could wean myself of it, but I'm not too sure. I tried before, but it didn't work. God I hate that fucker."

The group had suddenly become serious. Not just quiet, but downright serious. The kind of serious usually reserved for funerals or job interviews, two of Gil's least favorite things. How can anyone summarize your potential ability at a job by a ten minute interview. Then they want a piss test so you can go stock the shelves. You would probably work better if you got baked before you went to work, just like those South American fuckers that chew on cocoa leaves all day long as they haul big piles of shit through the jungle on their backs. You don't see them tinkling in a cup, you see them working their asses off. The big bosses get them all hooked, and then they can't break away. Kind of like reverse job security. You know they ain't about to leave, 'cause even if they do, within a day or so, they will be jonesing so hard, they will pay you to let them work.

## Chapter 11

### Plantation

"Achoo", Gil sneezed.

His little spontaneous exhalation sent the cherry bud flying.

The entire party sat breathless, waiting for it to hit the ground. The violent red and grey ember landed on the unread newspaper. It burned right through the ad for private lingerie modeling, through the latest line for this weekend's college hoops, through Zippy the Pinhead, and finally extinguished itself at the horoscopes. No one was laughing, they were far too high. Deidre felt she was watching a TV program, but seeing it through her eyes which were little video cameras, recording every detail of the episode. Ed tapped his fingers on the round piece of dining furniture, playing the opening notes to Styx, Come Sail Away, over and over and over. Cody, thinking that Ed was playing the opening notes to Journey's Open Arms, bobbed his head in time with the inferred rhythm. While all of this was going on, Gil was pouring beer on the spot where the pinnt of huke had come to rest. Ron was already deep into his fanny pack, prepared to reload, when suddenly it hit him. Catching everyone off guard, "Let's fuck up his mix, and he'll fucking off himself! The cops will think that he was messing around with a new blend, and he bought the fucking farm. They won't miss a fucking junkie dealer son of a bitch anyhow."

"Dude, where did you pull that one out of!" Cody pondered.

Ron, feeling victorious, "Out of my leather fucking pouch man, check it out!"

Ed reasoned, "I've got to get me one of those."

Deidre's eyes lit up, as if she had halogen foglights behind her corneas. "Yeah, that's it, that's the answer, he's gonna fucking die, that dick!"

Gil, relieved that everyone had spaced his party foul, and wanting it to stay that way, smiled along with the rest of the crew, as if he had just discovered penicillin. He'd been dinking with the bread mold in his head mold and ate a little by accident. His strep throat went away, and boom, he knew he was on to something big. Now, if he could just get the patent, and a pharmaceutical company to back him, I bet this could cure all kinds of nasty infections, like the clap. The fucking nobel prize was all his this year, wait, he didn't think of it, it was Ron. Hail Ron, the 1996 Nobel Prize winning murderer. "On behalf of the committee, we bestow upon you this medal of honor for your continued dedication in the realm of anarchy and lawlessness. Your amorality shines far above your peers, and you set a shining example, so that others may see the light of your deep and profound wisdom."

Cody got up to go to the bathroom, and on his way out declared "I'm gonna make a beer run, anyone want anything?"

Ed bellowed, "Grab me a quart, good buddy."

"Peel off some cash." Cody demanded. Ed complied and handed him all of the money in his wallet. He carried lots of change in his billfold, somehow feeling averse to crispies. The contents were poured into Cody's shaking hands. "One-dollar and thirteen cents! You fucking cheap bastard, alright I'll cover you again."

"Thanks dude." Ed polited.

"Me and Deidre want a sixer of something decent.", Gil told Cody, while handing him five dollars. Ron sat and smiled, knowing that since he was always generous with the bag of

tricks, the favor would be returned in the form of liquid entertainment capsules. "Convenience rules!"

Ron had been carrying a King Soopers bag when he came in the door, and Ed, innately sensing that it's contents were in the form of sustenance, inquired "What's in the bag man?"

Ron, being specifically vague "Delicious things..."

"What kind of deliciousness are you going to bestow on us today?" Ed adjudicated.

"Treats from the east. Crab Rangoons, Egga Ro (sounding like a China Man), and Beef a Jerky."

Deidre corrected, "Beef Jerky isn't from the east."

"You're not." Ron sarcastified, sending the burn right over Deidre's head, and into the wall. "Do you know about Rangoons?"

Deidre, feeling a bit befuddled, "Do I know what about them?"

"How they make women want to take their clothes off and dance around to tribal rhythms?" Ron explained.

Deidre, turning to Gil for safety, "Who the fuck is this guy?"

"That's Ron, the high priest of rhythmic noise." Gil explicated.

"Why is he looking at me like that?" she wondered aloud. The circle of cosmonauts turned their heavy, hoked out heads in Ron's direction. He was smoking his cigarette with his hair pulled down over his face, resembling Cousin It.

"Do you know what Cousin It's kid's name is?" he asked. Not waiting for a response he announced "That."

The table burst into the kind of laughter that only certain chemicals can bring on. The kind of laughter that makes your stomach hurt by the next day. The kind of laughter, that if you saw yourself on video tape laughing like this, you would think you were a fucking lunatic. The kind of laughter that makes at least 39 people in America swallow their tongues each year. The kind of laughter that makes Tootsie Rolls come out of your nose, if you are eating them, but haven't quite swallowed yet. The kind of laughter that makes you fart if you ate the Bell last night. The kind of laughter that made Gil fart. The kind of laughter that makes your jaw sore. The kind of laughter that could bring on an asthma attack in your friend Jill Deitrich if she was to get really baked and not bring her puffer with her. The kind of laughter that could make you shit your pants if you had the Bell last night. Gil sprang from his seat and ran to the pisser. Slamming the door, he angled his sphincter just in time to have one of those explosive blowouts, generally reserved for mortar shells, or 10 gauge shotguns with the choke wide open. Suffice it to say that this particular bathroom was not used again that day.

Cody returned with an armload of alcohol. Ron was preparing the food he had. Gil thought about his promise to himself that he would quit drinking, but when he saw Deidre crack open a cold one, he couldn't help but drink with her. It was the polite thing to do. Ed, anticipating a quart of ice cold Coors, was visibly disappointed when Cody handed him the "Big Jug" of malt liquor. Cody laughed, "That's what you get for a buck, you cheap fuck."

"Man, that ain't cool." Ed responded, while diving headfirst into the clear glass bottle of urine tinted liquid. "This tastes like fucking piss! I can't drink this."

"You're bummin' dude" Cody snickered as he opened the Labatt's in his hand.

Scents filled the room. Beef Jerky wrappers flew like gulls in the pacific wind. Crab Rangoons were delicious pillows of cream cheese and crustacean meat. Egg Rolls delighted the taste buds with hints of asian cuisine, while never specifically settling on a nationality. Fine Canadian lager wetted the lips of all but Ed. Smoke from, Cody's Camel Lights, Ron's Marlboro Mediums, and Gil's Marlboro Lights wafted sentimentally through the townhome, beckoning the 1920's when nobody gave you shit about enjoying a little tobacco. Hypocritical pigs. Their fucking parents had a room in the house just dedicated to smoking. A few books and magazines, a big brown leather chair, wood paneling, an oil lantern, a giant, immovable lighter, and an ashtray big enough for a party of ten pack a day smokers. It doesn't get any better than this...until it did.

Cody remembered the sweet chicken curry that he whipped up the previous night, but didn't have time to eat. Gil, in his finest one-upsmanship form, broke out 4 fat maduro cigars he had been carrying in his leather, but hadn't smoked yet. This wasn't it though. Ron had been holding out. He unzipped his satchel and retrieved a little ball of aluminum foil. Carving the contents delicately, he placed it in the pipe on top of some greenbud and passed it around the party. Hash was a real treat for a guy like Ron. The kind of guy who hardly gets stoned unless it's just the finest weed in the land. This was pure THC concentrate. Kind of like if you ate pure orange juice concentrate. You like orange juice well enough, but you sure don't want to get this huge overload of flavor, do you? Well maybe just this once.

The day evolved into dusk, with no one paying it much mind. Various episodes of humor and deep thought occurred. Many delicious foods were consumed, including a Dominator from Dominos, with all of the toppings. Ed ate, and failed to pay. The beer was enjoyed, but not overdone. The voluminous ashtray overflowed and was emptied, and was filled halfway again. The television was silent, but running. Music played, and bass notes traveled through the

travelers bodies, while just fadiddling their innards as they passed. Nighttime fell, and Ron headed home. Cody and Ed went to their rooms upstairs and left Gil on the couch with Deidre.

Gil, sensing that Deidre was getting cold, or sensing that this might be his chance, withdrew the down sleeping bag from the closet. Walking back to the sofa, he noticed a subtle twinkle in her eyeball. He sat very close, and pulled the cover up to their respective necks. Nonchalantly placing his right arm behind her head, he pulled her in for a kiss. Neither of them seemed to mind the low-level mixed-residue waste breath they had, this was love. Deidre, emboldened and embroiled by this long awaited sneak-attack on her lovely lips, threw her arms around Gil's abdomen. Gil, feeling a sudden flame in his pants, which he couldn't attribute to the Burrito Supreme, reached for Deidre's shirt and bra covered breasts. They were cool. Big, cool, fun, sexy, huge, massive, creamy boobs. He slobbered on them for a minute until he felt her hand rubbing his groin. Right fucking on, he thought to himself. He moved up her chest to her neck. Suckling like an undernourished child, he sucked the blood vessels in her head pedestal near the surface of her skin, creating an asymmetrical pattern of blue and red marks. She seemed to enjoy this until she got up and went to the bathroom. She saw her the damage in the mirror and screamed. This was the end of the romantic interlude.

## Chapter 12

### Constipation

Morning broke, like a brick through a window. Gil awoke with Deidre gripping him tightly. He liked the thought of this, but attributed it to the inadequate dimensions of their makeshift bed. Kissing her on the mouth caused her to welcome the new day. "Hi honey" she sang into his ear canal.

Ever the practical one, Gil asked "How did you sleep?"

"Like a book sleeps after the library closes. How about you?"

At a loss for a metaphor, Gil smirked "Alright, I guess." He knew he had been beaten. The king of similes was whipped in the first round by the young upstart from Cheyenne. She's the one.

Staring into each other's sight balls, they neared another sensual encounter, when Cody tromfled down the stairs. "Woah, what a weird night." he spat, awaiting confirmation from the other two participants present in the room.

"Yeah, no shit" Gil agreed.

Deidre wanted to know, "What are we gonna do today?"

"Let's figure out how were gonna bag this fuck that you live with." answered Gil.

"Oh man, he's gonna he pissed that I didn't go home last night, AND THESE HICKEYS!"

Gil fired the first shot "We've gotta do it today."

Luke had spoken. He would lead the fleet into battle against the Death Star. Lord Vader was on board. Deidre was Vader's woman, and Ed came down the stairs looking like Yoda. He directed his goblin gaze at the prettiest girl in the room, "Hey, you're still here?" Turning to Gil with a surprised look on his face he continued, "What the fuck did you do to her neck?"

Gil blamed circumstance, "There was no more pizza."

Deidre smiled at Ed, with a shit eating grin on her face, and turned toward Gil "I'm better than pizza, aren't I sweetie?"

Gil nodded his head in acknowledgment, causing Ed to shake his, and Cody to leave the room in hopes of finding some leftovers in the fridge.

"We have to figure out how were gonna mess up the Rivets and get him to eat some." Gil concluded.

"He usually leaves around noon on Sundays to go wash his Camaro. He says he likes the sun to reflect the purple Imron metal flake paint. He says you can't appreciate except in direct sunlight, because of the subtle tones. I should have never dated a guy with a Camaro. What the fuck was I thinking. They are just the kind of cars that insecure, poorly endowed freaks drive. (with a deep chasm of sar) Let's see how long of mark we can leave when I dump the clutch. Boy, how fucking ignorant can you get. The only thing worse is those guys with the twelve foot tall pickups. (mockingly) Even though I'm a pud, my truck is big, and I'll run you over. L-O-S-E-R!" qualified Deidre as she held her index finger and thumb up to form the letter L. "We'll wait, and when he leaves, we'll go in and put some poison in his mix."

Gil wondered where they would get poison. It's not the kind of thing that you can just go to Safeway and get a box of,

at least not something strong enough to kill you from just a little pill. "Who do we know that could get some poison?"

"I'll bet I can get some from the hospital", Ed replied. He worked at the local veterinary clinic, and had access to any number of toxic substances. "I can get some sodium cyanide that they use to put the dogs to sleep with."

"Perfect, we'll put him out of his misery, like a dog with half a head left, that just got hit by a VW bus." Deidre imagined.

Gil knew they would have to hide it well, and cover all of their tracks. Ed went upstairs to take a shower. Shouting to Ed as he walked to his room, Gil said "We're gonna go by my place and get cleaned up, I'll give you a call in a few." Cody, in a bacon and egg trance, barely noticed the pair exit his abode.

They arrived at Gil's dilapidated hell hole and ventured in. Fortunately the window had been left open, allowing some air to circulate. UN-Fortunately, it allowed Shotzy to circulate out the window and onto the pointed crest of the chain link fencing below. Gil, amazingly relieved by this turn of events vowed "I will never get a fucking wiener dog again. That was the stupidest dog in the fucking world." Deidre, simultaneously saddened and amused, slipped into a moment of uncomfortable, tearful laughter.

After the diachotimic episode left her alone, she suggested to Gil "Why don't you take a shower first dear, and I'll straighten this place up a bit."

Gil, never being one to turn down a freebie countered, "Good idea, start out in the living room though, because that's where the worst of it is."

Deidre didn't bat an eye. She wanted to please her new love. She felt safe with Gil. Safe like all of the soldiers

inside Cheyenne Mountain, where NORAD is housed. Safe like the queen ant, deep inside the anthill, with all of the other ants waiting on her, until the pesticides seep through the soil, contaminating the entire colony and polluting the aquifer below, which is the lifeblood of the community. Safe, like the couple who just spent ninety percent of their disposable income for the year on life insurance, so that their spouse would be taken care of when the inevitable happens, death. Safety in numbers, Deidre hated being alone. Safe like a new set of Michelins, but you can't stop very well, even with new tires, when you are on sheer ice after a quick snowstorm which half melts, then freezes, then on your way to work in the morning you smash into some arab dude who forgot that the gas is on the right. Pissed off at the elements, yourself, and this foreign fuck who wants to look at all of the pretty western girls in Playboy, while he sits at the stop sign waiting for it to turn green. Deidre saw red. It was the light blinking on Gil's answering machine. Curious, like all women, and I mean all women, she hit the 'messages' button.

"Gil, dude, it's seven-thirty man. Thanks for getting me out of jail, I'll pay you back next Thursday when I get paid. It's a long story, but them fucking pigs, they hate you if you don't look like them. Fucking cocksuckers owe me a new front quarterpanel. Anyway dude, give me a buzz, I'm gonna go give myself one now. Late." The message ended with the sounds of water being sucked through a tube. Deidre, not knowing this was Rudy, raised one eyebrow like Spock and awaited message number two.

"Hi sugar." Deidre's pulse quickened. What was another girl doing calling her man. Lauren continued, "Sorry about the mess I made, but your place really stinks. I did like sleeping with you though, it reminded me of the old days. Maybe we should go out some time again. Well I'll call you later, Ciao."

Deidre knocked on the door to the shower, "Gil?"

"Yeah, what's up?" he gargled.

"You had a message from some guy who says thanks for bailing him out, and he'll pay you back Thursday."

Gil responded "That's cool, any others?"

"No, that's it" Deidre confirmed.

The cleaning continued, with Gil picking up where Deidre left off when she went to take her own shower. Smelling fresh as Renuzit, their towel shrouded bodies met in the hallway. They hugged each other, which caused the teri-cloth tarps to fall to the carpet. Their warm, damp bodies pressed against each other. Deidre's mammaries tickled Gil's midsection. Gil's unit tickled Deidre's belly. This made both of them smile, in that way that you can only smile when you have a moment like this, or right after you reach orgasm, or exactly halfway through a difficult dump.

Falling into Gil's room, they laid on the bed together, pulling the sheets over their shivering, but adrenaline filled bodies. They got close, really close. Would this be the moment they both had been anticipating. He ran his fingers through her modern hair. She ran he fingers across his white chest, and grabbed his arm. Pulling his face into her oral love cavern, they kissed romantically. Knock knock. They ignored the door. Knock knock knock knock knock knock knock knock etc...Gil rose from his dream sequence and grabbed his jeans.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Gil asked the chipper Steven, who was eating a Turkey sub from Quizno's.

"I'm ready to party dude, let me in." He burst into the living room, and caught a glimpse of a very naked Deidre closing the bedroom door. "Woah guy, I didn't know you were about to get some. Sorry."

"Shut up asshole. We were just showering. Mind your own fucking business." Gil warned. "Do you want to help us get the dude that beat her up?"

"Yeah man, let's fucking kill him."

Gil, taking on a much more somber tone, "That's what were gonna do. We're gonna kill him. Ed is gonna get some poison and were gonna mix it with these drugs he makes. We have got to do it. For Deidre, for me."

"No, seriously, how are we gonna get this dude?" Steven, noticing no change in Gil's expression "You are fucking serious aren't you? Alright, count me in."

Deidre walked out of the bedroom, having had time to style her lid, looking like an ice cream cone, said to a drooling Steven, "Oh, hi, I remember you from the other night."

"Hi, I've gotta go, Gil told me so." Steven said on his way out the door.

Gil recommended, "Call us over at Ed and Cody's in about an hour."

The door closed, and Gil turned to observe Deidre walking back into the bedroom. He started to follow until she went into the bathroom. Back to the couch, he fired up the shitbox. How many times can you flash through the same five channels. Random acts of senseless violence leapt off the screen. Sounds of salesmen pierced his ears with chrome hoops. Roger Moore did a bad impression of James Bond. A preacher tried to sell him a ticket to heaven. The hidden world of insects was revealed to be very similar to our own society. Deidre returned. "Hey gorgeous, let's go get a bite to eat."

Gil didn't even notice the marks on her face. She had covered them fairly convincingly with makeup, and the swelling had left her previously obese lips for the most part. The Buick started on the first try. Denny's was the call. Grand Slam. Eggs poached, but rock fucking hard, no yellow runny shit, and get it right the first time cuz I'm starving. Deidre opted for the belgian waffle with strawberry syrup. Topped with a healthy dollop of whipped cream, she looked like a kid at the fair in a pie eating contest with his hands tied behind his back. She mangled that waffle beyond recognition. Tearing the dough with her pretty ivory molars, bits of breakfast crawled between her teeth and held their ground. Strawberry flavored pancake icing laid down on her lick mat and kicked back for a few. Butter dripped through the lowest orifice on her face, down her chin and onto her plate.

Gil, inbetween moments of anxious euphoria at the sight of Deidre scarfing such sensual breakfast edibles, ate.

The male half of the party, in his most manly way, picked up the tab, paid, held the door, and escorted his maiden to the waiting ride. A quick peck on the cheek and a "Thanks" took place. Subtle, sweet, insinuating, delectable, hopeful, cheerful and thankful. All of that from one strawberry flavored, sticky ass kiss.

## Chapter 13

### Elation

Pulling into the slot in front of Ed's place, they noticed his car was absent from the lineup. Cody's, Ron's, Deidre's and Steven's cars were all there, but conspicuously absent was Ed's.

"He went to get the poison." Ron affirmed.

Gil contemplated, "Man, I can't believe we're actually gonna kill someone."

"People die everyday." Cody reasoned. "If it weren't for death, think of how many fucking people there would be. This place would be fucking crawling with people, like it isn't already. It would be like, chaos. It would suck shit. Suck shit through a straw and gut it. Suck the livin' shit out of shit. It would suck shit so hard, shit would wish it had stayed in your ass. It would suck big hefty bags full of shit. I've gotta pinch a loaf."

Cody went upstairs where he knew the Angel Soft lived. Next to the throne of good fortune. He reveled in his daily biological function. Deidre, afraid to discuss Cody's obvious fixation, changed the subject, "He should be gone pretty soon, it's almost 12."

Ron and Steven were drinking 22 ounce bottles of Breckenridge Brewery's finest blend when Ed returned. "I've got the goods." Ed opened a small pill bottle full of white tablets. "Don't touch these, just touching them can make you sick. These are fucking nasty man. Kill a dog in about 5 seconds. Even a big ass dog like a Great Dane drops in 7 or 8. They kind of get crazy with convulsions, then their eyes roll back into their heads, they let out one last little lame yelp, and they're fucking dead."

Ed resealed the dangerous container and sat down at the table.

Gil, apparently being hit by a heavy dose of reality looked at Deidre for comfort. "Do you still want to go through with this?"

Deidre didn't wait to answer "He's gonna fucking go down like a big dog."

Ron, always able to see the lighter side "We should put a tape recorder in the room to see if he barks."

"There's something fucking wrong with you, man." Steven psychoanalyzed.

Cody, pouring over with rejuvenation, waltzed into the room like he had just gotten laid by all three Charlie's Angels.

Kate Jackson, then Jaclyn Smith, then Cheryl Ladd for dessert. He felt like Steve Austin, having just laid 30 inches of bionic cable. He went from being H. R. Puff N Stuff to the Incredible Hulk. He just boned Wonder Woman. He was regressing to the origins of his anal fixation. His shit was swimming like the Man from Atlantis, down the pipes, behind the walls to the waste treatment plant, where the grass grew long in the summer. It used to be right at the corner of Belleview and Santa Fe, until they built the new one about 5 miles north. Some imbecile actually opened a Waffle House next to it. People ate there! The Waffle House lives on, but there are rumors that it is haunted by the spirits of the unprocessed feces, whose souls still roam the area, looking for chlorine.

Gil began with a pep talk, "Well men, we have a job to do.

The enemy has given away his location. The window of opportunity is wide open, and the sun is shining through. Follow your heart to the source of the light. We must persevere. No one is going to win this battle except for you. Now lets go out there and waste this cocksucker!"

The group responded with a hesitant "yeah." They were scared.

"Alright, but who is gonna drive?" Cody interjected.

"We can all fit into my car." Deidre explained.

Ron, needing a minute to sort through his emotions paused, "Let's take some hits first." He loaded up his favorite sneak a toke and breathed deep. Coughing, without releasing any of the smoke, he continued speaking, being careful not to use his lungs, "Cool, I'm ready." He blew a thick cumulus cloud into the room. "Today's forecast, partly deadly, with a chance of pain."

They filed out of the door and piled into Deidre's green, 2 door Pontiac Grand Prix. It was a tight squeeze, but they managed. Gil secured the spot in the middle front, to keep Steven from making any moves on Deidre. Steven had a reputation for getting caught with his pants down with other buddies' girls. This one time, he got caught with Spike Viril's girl, and Spike is not a guy to mess with when he's drunk, which is frequently. So Spike walks into the bathroom and his girl is on her knees, unzipping Steven's pants. Steven, being the bullshitter that he is, actually convinced Spike that she was helping him get his zipper open so he could piss. Spike wasn't very bright, but Gil was, and he knew that Steven was like a wolf in a hen house.

"I'm starving" Ed erupted.

"No shit, let's grab some food." Steven agreed.

Deidre asked where to go, and the consensus was for the King.

A mountain of whoppers and one chicken sandwich for Steven were ordered. The same guy who would pollute his body with alcohol and marijuana wouldn't eat red meat. Go figure. Deidre had a whopper, but opted to drink a diet coke. Typical. So they ate in the parking lot, refueling their tired bodies for the forthcoming job.

They drove for about ten minutes, with nothing of note taking place, until they pulled in front of Deidre's house. A modest house in the suburb of Englewood, there were no signs of drug dealing, or manufacturing to speak of. Deidre spoke, "Kyle likes to keep a low profile. He won't let anyone come here to buy the Rivets. He only sells them to people he has known for a while...OH SHIT, here he comes!"

The carload of satisfied Burger King patrons whipped their skulls around and found a clean, unique, deep purple, IROC-Z bearing down on them. There he was, at the wheel, the same beast whom Gil dropped to his knees in the club the other night. The same beast who beat the shit out of the love of Gil's life. The same beast who had Gil's little angel addicted to cheap barbiturates. The same beast who...OH SHIT, he has a gun!

Deidre jammed the car into drive and pinned it. She laid a solid fourteen feet of rubber, which thoroughly impressed Kyle in his Camaro. He got over the joy he felt watching the tires smoke in a big hurry and picked up the pursuit. His car was infinitely faster than hers, even though he had installed a racing cam and a Holley 4 barrel double pumper on her 327. He kept his car faster, much faster. Were talking pop-up pistons, bored .040 over, posi-traction rear end, Hooker headers with the obligatory Cherry Bomb exhaust package, chrome Moroso air cleaner and valve covers, full bore racing cam, all on a '73 Cadillac 454. 50's on the back, and pizza cutters on the front, accented by deep dish Centerlines. This car was fine. He even had a big whale-tail on the trunk lid, just to hold the road, and of course, fully functional traction bars to offset the torque of the stall converter.

Deidre, however, had one thing going for her. She was a better driver. Her daddy had been a circle track racer in Wyoming and taught her to maneuver a vehicle at a very young age. Every Saturday they would go to the rodeo arena with a

case of Buckhorn beer, with the trailer in tow. He had a permanent spot at the pole. They didn't even make him go through the qualifying heats because he was the county champion 6 years running. The fact that he was also president of the Southeast Wyoming Stock Car Club didn't hurt either. The cars, with their open exhaust would vibrate the stands, which kept the wives entertained throughout the mucky, dusty days of summer. Deidre would watch her dad race that '64 Impala around and around and around and around and around and around and around. Circle track racing is one of the more boring auto sports, and that little fact was never lost on Deidre, but all of that training was about to pay off as she took a right on Oxford Avenue.

Kyle knew she could drive, but he was finding out just how well. As he cranked his obelisk of inferiority onto the street where Deidre had gone, he saw her coming straight at him. She had done a doughnut in the middle of the road, and her smoke cloud filled half the block. She ran a stop sign, caught 32 inches of air as she went through the dip, and sped south. Kyle spun his purple phallus around as quickly as he could, but when he got to the stop sign there was a cement mixer coming. By the time it had passed, Deidre was too far away to allow a reasonable chance of catching her, besides he reasoned, she would have to come home some time.

## Chapter 14

### Creation

The car was silent. Deidre was sweating profusely, like she had been on the set of Apocalypse Now, and Scorsese made her eat some acid, then try to act. He was eating lots of acid too, but it wasn't very cool of him to expect Brando to improvise while under the influence. Gil noticed that even though Deidre was sweating like an All-Star Wrestler, her perspiration had no odor. What a great chick, I'll bet her shit doesn't even smell half bad.

Steven, Ron, Cody and Ed were flabbergasted. They saw a huge woman at the bus stop, farting, and they imagined how bad it stunk.

Deidre was confused "What are we gonna do now?"

"I don't know, but if I don't take a piss soon, you're gonna have some yellow seat cushions." Ed said. He was never one to mince words, which is probably why he didn't have a girlfriend. The prettiest girl in the car drove into the McDonald's parking lot. Ed got out to relieve himself, and the rest of the passengers postulated permutations of penalties possible for punishing the purple Camaro prick.

"Let's wait 'til he goes to sleep, then go get him." Gil suggested.

Examining the chances of success, Deidre responded, "No fucking way, he's the lightest sleeper ever. Besides, I can't wait that long, I need to get some Rivets, I'm starting to feel pretty crummy."

"I've got it." Cody spurted out. "Let's have Deidre call him and tell her to meet him somewhere, and when he leaves, we'll sneak in and fuck up the pills."

Everyone grinned a grin of approval in recognition the lighting bolt of brilliance that had just electrocuted Cody's corpus colossum. Ed was grinning as well. Not willing to stop with urination, he had hatched an Axl anal baby. The proud father smoothed into the backseat of the green machine, and just sat there looking like a winner. "I'm goin' to Disneyland."

After explaining the plan to Ed, Gil handed Deidre a quarter for the phone call. She walked like she was going down the face of Chatfield Dam. Like she had to catch herself on the big rocks, and make each step certain. Her derrière motioned back and forth like a pendulum in a grandfather clock. This was not ignored by anyone in the lime colored vehicle, and the fact that no one was ignoring it was not ignored by Gil. "What are you fuckers looking at?"

Steven spoke, "Chill bro, were just takin' in the scenery." His head was shoved into the passenger side window, which convinced him to curtail his voyeurism.

She returned with bad news. "He's not home yet." This was rather ironic, because Kyle was home, he was just taking a dump. Not just any dump, but his first dump in two days. He ate way too much salad at Sizzler and couldn't seem to expedite the glob-o-greens intestinal tour. Next time, he surmised, he'd go to Kentucky Fried.

Meandering around the city, they saw a number of not so famous, would-be tourist attractions. The spot where Alan Berg was shot. The Hostess factory. The Purina Dog Chow factory. The site of the annual Stock Show. The refinery. The rocky mountain arsenal, where they store enough nerve gas in leaky drums to kill every dairy cow in Wisconsin. Lakeside, the world's dirtiest amusement park, where they annually find a minimum of 23 dead bodies at the bottom of the lake. Lauren's old apartment, which looks more like a

prop from Stalag 17. Various brands of road kill including a tabby, a golden retriever, and two prairie dogs.

Gil noticed that every dead animal they had come upon was beige, but kept this observation to himself. Yuppies are beige, when are we gonna see a Yuppie splattered on someone's grill, he mused.

Upon concluding the 50 cent tour of Denver, they found another pay phone in front of Kitty's porn palace. A sudden burst of hilarity filled the spacious interior of Deidre's battle cruiser. "What?" she asked.

"It's the duck!" they replied in quadraphonic sound. Their mutual friend, Martin, was leaving the shop of whorrors with an armload of adult toys. He heard the mirth makers and walked over to his amigos.

"What are you guys doing here?" Martin nervously wondered.

Cody teased, "We're spying on you man, we have pictures if you want to buy them. We also have video tape that were gonna send Kerry (his girlfriend)." As Cody finished his sentence, he had to recapture the last few words he had uttered and eat them. Kerry walked out with a plastic bag, containing what was certainly the biggest dildo in the shop. Martin took hold of Kerry's hand and the happy Duke and Duchess of Smut skipped down Colfax Boulevard, and into the sunset.

"Those two are fucking made for each other." Steven concluded.  
"And they're made for fucking each other."

Not trusting sanitation of the phone at this location, Deidre pulled away from the curb and went to the phone at Hardee's. She called her house. "Hello", the irritated voice answered.

"Kyle honey, this is Deidre. Why did you start chasing me today?"

"I saw who you were with. I remember that guy from the Club. I'm gonna fucking kill him, and if he laid a hand on you...", Deidre rubbed her bruised neck as he spoke, "I'll fucking kill you too." He paused, "You must be feeling pretty lousy by now without your daily dosage. Come home and have some, I'm about to make a fresh batch."

"My car is broken down, you're gonna have to come get me. It stopped running after I dropped those guys off. I think I put a hole in the oil pan when I hit that dip."

"That's what you get for driving so crazy. Where the hell are you?"

"I'm at Colfax and Dartmouth, at the Hardee's."

"I'll be there in about a half hour, just sit tight.", click.

She slinked back to the car, licking her teeth and winking at Gil. Sitting next to Gil she whispered into the hole in the side of his noggin "When all this is over, I'm gonna give you a thank you that you'll never forget." Gil pitched a tent, but luckily the seat belt kept things in their appropriate location.

Rubber met pavement, and the six intrepid adventurers zoomed south. Ed rattled the Sodium Cyanide pills in Gil's ear, to remind him of what was about to happen. Gil imagined he was hearing an ancient Incan rhythm, right before the big sacrifice. The virgin, dressed in a sheer white gown was being brought to the edge of the cliff. Her parents are freaking out, saying that she deserves to live, but the tribe agrees that it is in their best interest to toss her over the edge. All the while this chick, who is about to die, just wishes she could've hooked up with a dude at least once, and then some other poor broad would get smashed

against the rocks. So two musclehead servants fling her into oblivion, and on her way down, she remembers that her uncle had molested her as a child and she had repressed it.

The gods know this, and there is a 20 year drought, killing the entire village.

## Chapter 15

### Condemnation

The prettiest girl at the wheel came to an abrupt halt in the driveway of her home. Kyle was gone. This was their chance. She opened the door cautiously, with her tribe in tow. She felt like the mother goose with all of the little goslings waddling in her tracks. Kyle's holster sat on the coffee table, empty. There was a light flashing on the answering machine. Deidre applied an adequate degree of force to engage the playback mode. "Hi D, this is Kyle. I figured you were bluffing me, so I left you this message. I have been watching the house, and by the time you hear this, I am already on my way inside. Don't bother trying to run, you're fucked...beeeeeep."

"Holy fucking shit!" she shrieked. "Let's get the fuck out of here!", but it was too late. Kyle, brandishing his nickel plated firearm burst through the front door. Immediately he singled out Gil and cracked him in the face with the butt of the semi-automatic weapon. Gil fell to the ground, and decided this was a convenient place to relax, so he didn't attempt to rise.

"Sit down, all of you!" the beast demanded. "Not you" he directed at Deidre. Noticing her love wounds, he smacked her in the ear, sending her into a framed portrait of himself and his Camaro. The glass shattered, and Deidre joined her friends of the floor. "What the fuck are you all up to?"

The prettiest and bloodiest girl present attempted an explanation. "I told them about the Rivets, and we came to get some." This pissed the beast off, but not nearly as much as the truth would have.

"So you wanted to steal some of my stash, did you? I tell you what. I'm gonna give each and every one of you a free sample. Get up!" The weary assassins rose and were directed down the stairs, into the basement. Kyle had a big Pier 1 mixing bowl that he used to blend the drugs. Various bottles of Valium, Percodan, Methaqualone, Darvocet and Tylenol with Codeine were strewn about the room.

"Honey, what are you gonna do?" Deidre asked. There was no response. Kyle lined up the six thieves against the far wall and began preparing his blend. Like a great chef, each ingredient was precisely measured. Pills were ground with a 1920's mortar and pestle, carefully folded into the pot pourri and packed neatly into Contac capsules which had been emptied. Kyle handed them out like an old lady giving out religious flyers on halloween instead of candy. Five pills each. Kyle knew this should be enough to send them all to the moon, except for Deidre. She got the lions share of the new batch, 15. The most she had ever taken was 10, and that was over the course of a night. Kyle snorted a line of ground valium, then waved his gun at the crew in such a manner as to suggest they should eat or they would eat lead.

Pills went down, one by one. It was hard to swallow without any water, but under the circumstances no one complained, not even Ed. Within 5 minutes, they were feeling pretty translucent. Within 10 they were all fast asleep. Kyle couldn't figure out what to do with them, but he reasoned he had time to mull it over.

The beast sat on an orange bean bag chair and watched the slumbering criminals. Deidre began to cough. Kyle sat upright. Her body began to shake. Kyle's eyes got big, and he poised his body to react. She started vomiting hamburger, diet soda and cheap drugs, all in a mustard colored paste. The way she was laying would have made her suffocate from her puke if it weren't for the semi-alert Kyle. Being the saint he was, he laid her across a chair and propped her head on the rim of a bucket. She was

entirely unconscious, but kept on heaving for 8 minutes. Kyle, relieved when it ended, went upstairs to have a Budweiser. He only drank the king of beers. He thought of himself as the king of something. He didn't know what, maybe mechanics, maybe pharmacists, maybe women, yeah that's it, Kyle, King of Women. He went in his room, yanged his choda, and when he finished, grabbed a cold one and sunk into the softness of the loveseat. Kyle had cable. Not just the kind he left in the stool once in a while, but actual Cable Television.

Click, on went the tube. Deidre, having actually ingested only a fraction of the Rivets, slowly came to. She heard the boob tube blaring, and knew Kyle was in his usual Rivet daze, watching Geraldo, Montel, or Maury Povich, depending on what time it was.

Wiping what had been the contents of her stomach from her pale face, she sat upright and leaned against the wall. Her friends were still breathing, so they would likely be alright. She thought about how she could get the beast. Remembering the pills that were in Ed's jacket, she reached in his inner pocket and pulled them out. How could she get Kyle to eat them. After 12 seconds of deliberation, she decided to cover all of her bases. First, she filled her purse with as many clean Rivets as she could find, then removed the deadly drugs from Ed's pale pill canister. Grinding 5 of them at once, she dumped the majority of the powder into the mixing bowl, and the remainder she put on the broken piece of mirror alongside the valium Kyle had sniffed. Then she packed a couple of tainted Rivets, so there would be a few when Kyle came down. He had done this for so long in front of her, that it wasn't very difficult to emulate his technique. She returned the remainder of the bottle to Ed's jacket. By this time, the 7 Rivets she did digest caught up with her again and she leaned against the wall to take a little nap.

Kyle too sacked out after observing the mating ritual of the American urban professional on Maury. They went into local Manhattan clubs and asked people why they were there (which was inevitably to meet someone), what their best opening line was (which was generally "so what do you do?"), and whether money or looks were more important (instinctively, the men chose looks, and the women chose money). Kyle fancied himself a Yuppie at heart. Lots of cash, and boy did he like pretty women! Mmmm Mmmm. Yup, I gotta get me one of them. Them'r guuud. Boy howdy, Kyle really got a kick out of TV!

Gil was the first to awaken. The same thing kept running through his mind. He imagined being on a dark desert highway, with cool wind in his hair. At the rate he was going, he could probably check out any time he liked, but he knew he could never leave until he stabbed the beast with a steely knife. He caught himself in the midst of post traumatic downer syndrome. How was Deidre? was she still alive? Crawling over to her side, he felt her breathing. He tried to push her hair out of her face, but between the blood and the barf, it was pretty well glued in place. The beast was gone. Gil couldn't imagine where he was, but he was definitely not in the basement. The TV was still squawking. Some infomercial about being able to fix tears in your vinyl furniture. He shook Deidre by the shoulders, but she only let out a pained gurgling sound. All of the commotion woke Steven up. He bounced to his feet and said "What the...where...how did I get here?"

Gil imploring silence "Be quiet man, the dude is probably upstairs in front of the tube. Help me wake these other guys up, Deidre is out cold. They proceeded to wake up Ron and Cody. Ed was another story. He could sleep through anything. Curled up in a fetal position on the concrete floor, Ed harkened back to the days when he would curl up next to his big stuffed gorilla and doze off for 12 or 14 hours at a time.

The four coherent killers crept cautiously up the stairs.

Sure enough, Kyle was passed out cold. 8 empty longnecks of the Busch family's finest were arranged in a mock pyramid on the floor, next to his feet. The model on the infomercial was like a blow up doll. Huge, inhuman breasts bulged out of her epidermally balanced bustier. The four musketeers fixated, acknowledged, and proceeded to attack the slumbering bear, who had left his pistol in his room when he spanked his spordunkel.

Between the four of them, the synergistic energy possessed was equivalent to 2 regular men. All of those Rivets had zapped their stamina. The beast wasn't exactly prepared for a fight either. Disoriented upon waking up to a fist in the mouth and a half nelson around his neck, he was too confused to get angry right away. It came quickly though. He threw Steven across the room, just as he took a fireplace poker on the collar bone, which dropped him like you would drop a Big Mac if you found that the crunch between the patties was a flame broiled cricket.

Kyle was out cold, so the brawlers tried to decide what to do with him. Now that there was so much damage around the house, and to Kyle's face, they couldn't just shove a cyanide pill up his ass and pretend he sat on it by accident. They would have to be much more clever than that.

Ron went into the kitchen and found a roll of strapping tape. They wrapped the beast so tight that his hands and feet turned shades of blue. After dragging him down the stairs, they threw him in a heap in the corner of the basement like a tent after a shitty camping trip. It rained the whole time, the beer ran out about 34 hours too soon. Someone left the weed in the backpack with the tanning butter, so you had to take coconut oil hits. Ants, no firewood, no fish, jambox ate a tape, had a flat and slept like shit. So the tent gets thrown in a pile, still soaking wet, and the next time you drag it out it's covered with mold, but that doesn't matter because you lost half the spikes in the mud.

## Chapter 16

### Revelation

Deidre woke up after an hour or so, Ed stayed crashed for 3 more hours. They were all up in the kitchen eating when the beast began to grumble. They ran to the basement to see him thrashing around on the floor like a native cutthroat trout on the bow of a black boat on a sunny day. He resembled a giant larva of some huge tropical insect that was about to hatch. Steven, still jacked from the blow he took upstairs, lifted a nearby bar stool, and broke it over the back of the beast's neck. Kyle went back to sleep.

"Let's throw his ass off of Frank's Rock." Steven suggested.

Deidre, beginning to feel a bit sorry for her mummified roommate, "Maybe we shouldn't kill him."

This pissed Gil of royally, "What do you mean we shouldn't kill him? This fucking bastard was gonna kill us, he nearly killed you, he would probably kill his dog if he thought he could get a few bucks for the hide. Fuck this prick, we've gotta cap him. Game fucking over."

"How the fuck are we gonna make it look like an accident now that our finger prints are all over the house, and his fucking neck bone is probably broken?" Ron asked the group.

Ed had an idea, "Let's make it look like he fell down the stairs. He took the bad pills, was standing near the stairs and fell on his neck, thus fracturing the coropital fibulate."

"Great idea Quincy, but we still have fingerprints all over the place." Ron interjected.

Deidre, fearing for her freedom, "Yeah, I'll be the prime suspect if they find him dead."

"What if they just don't find him?" Cody suggested.

"Where the hell are we gonna stash him?" Ron wanted to know.

"What about Rudy? He drives medical waste to the incinerator. We could have his ass incinerated along with all of the other body parts they burn there. There would be no trace of him. We'll drive him out in his Camaro, leave it abandoned like he was kidnapped or something, then haul his ass to the oven. They might suspect foul play, but without our prints in his car, and without a body, it would just be unsolved." All eyes in the room were on Cody. This was one hell of an idea.

Gil, walking up the stairs "Rudy owes me a favor, I'm gonna give him a call." He lifts the phone, dials, and waits for an answer.

"Hello" Rudy drawled.

Gil explained, "Rude, this is Gil. We have a problem, we need your help."

Rudy, suspecting the worst, "Yeah, what's going on, I said I'd pay you Thursday. I'm broke til then."

"No man, I don't need the money right away, this is big, very serious shit."

"I'm listening."

"We need to use the incinerator. We have a dead body we need to get rid of. It's a long story, he tried to kill us, but we got him first. Well, actually, we still have to finish him off, but were gonna."

"Who all is with you?"

"Ron, Cody, Steven, Ed and Deidre."

Rudy's interest was sparked, "Who is Deidre?"

"This chick I met at Cody's house, she's awesome. It's her ex-boyfriend-slash-roommate that we need to burn."

"This ain't gonna be easy. The guy who runs the thing is crazy, and he likes to look in the boxes before he sends them. He's fucking nuts. We could probably pay him to burn the shit without asking any questions. He is pure white trash, a hundred bucks would shut him up. Problem is you have to fit the dude into boxes. I can get you some, but you have to cut him up and pack him in cardboard."

Gil, feeling queasy at the thought "No shit, we can't just toss him in whole like a Filet-o-fish into a fryer? I don't know if I can cut up a dead dude, even a prick like this."

"That's the only way." Rudy explained.

"Well shit, let me call you back, we have to discuss this.  
Later"

"Later." click.

Meandering down the stairs, Gil realized something had occurred in his absence. Steven, sweating from his brow, "He died man, I fucking killed him, he's fucking dead man, how the hell, I didn't hit him that hard, well I guess I did. Check it out Gil, no fucking pulse. He's histo, core fucking zero, I fucking killed him."

Gil, accepting Steven's prognosis, didn't bother to check for signs of life. They were all in a circle around Kyle, as if he would get up if they waited long enough. Deidre, feeling the stress of the moment popped a Rivet out of her purse and

swallowed. She kneeled on the floor next to him, threw her arms around his taped up carcass and cried for 23 seconds. "Alright, we've got to do something with him."

Gil passed on the information Rudy had provided. "Here's the deal. Rudy said we could get him incinerated without anyone knowing, but there are two little details we need to take care of. The first is that we will need a hundred bucks to bribe the guy who runs the thing. The second won't be that easy. We have to filet this mother fucker into pieces that will fit into Rudy's cardboard boxes. We need to cut him into 1 cubic foot chunks and pack him like albacore into paper crates. We need to carve him into blocks and toss the parts into..."

"No fucking way" Deidre said, stopping Gil in mid description, "First of all, where are we gonna do it. Second of all, he's not some fucking turkey, we would need a chainsaw or something. Third of all, I'm about to puke as it is, just being near a dead guy, I ain't about to slice his fucking legs off. Fourth of all, I didn't kill him, Steven did."

This rubbed Steven the wrong way, "What? You fucking bitch! The only reason we came over here was to kill him for you, and now you are gonna blame it all on me? We should have just let him fucking kill you, you fucking dumbfuck."

"Sorry, I guess it kind of was my idea, but I still can't chop his arms off, one of you men has to."

There was a 79 second silence which Ed broke "You fucking pussies, I'll cut this fucking fish a new one. Give me a knife."

"You'll cut him up?" an astonished Ron inquired.

"Fuck yeah, I'll save you a drumstick if you want."

Gil interrupted, "Don't do anything yet, we have to get the boxes, and arrange the big meltdown. I'm gonna go call Rudy back."

Ron feeling stressed from the whole ordeal, and being a barbiturate connoisseur, picked up a Rivet out of the bowl and popped it in his mouth. "Noooo!" Deidre screamed, having just realized what was going on. "Spit it out, spit it the fuck out, that's a bad one!"

Ron complied, hacking the pill canister in Deidre's previously attractive face. The pills were not perfectly clean on the outside, and Ron had ingested some of the sodium cyanide inadvertently. Here's what he remembered happening, although no one else in the room quite saw it this way. The lightbulb turned into a drop of liquid glass and fell from the ceiling, splashing on the floor. A giant butterfly came out of the wall and stuck it's tongue in the outlet. Ants and grasshoppers ran from the mixing bowl, covered Ron's body, biting him repeatedly, then scampered through the cracks and disappeared. Deidre grew horns and a tail. Cody was two dimensional, he disappeared when he turned on his side. Ron rode the monkey house ride at Lakeside, and became very dizzy. A yellow ferret lived in his stomach and tried desperately to get out, eventually succeeding. His feet were on backwards, making it impossible to walk. There was a fast growing bacteria eating away his brain, starting with recent memories, and working it's way through adolescence. Leaves grew out of the back of his right hand, and potting soil spewed from his nostrils. His chest opened up, exposing his heart to the outside air, causing a great deal of discomfort. Ed's hair burned like satan's own inferno, then Ed's head exploded.

Ron awoke with the group hovering over him. "What the fuck just happened?"

"You freaked man. You've been Nam-ing out for four hours. Are you O.K.? You don't look so good, you ate some of the cyanide dude." Cody recounted.

"That's fucking insane", Ron reported, "I tripped hard. Fucking bad news man. Bad fucking trip. What the fuck...pause...so what did I miss?"

Gil was the spokesman for the group, "Rudy is gonna get the boxes, but we've gotta cut this fucker up somewhere. We're thinking down by the Platte so the blood will wash away. We've got to do it far away so them fucking dogs can't track him. Once we pack him in, Rudy will throw him in the trailer and cart him up to the oven."

"Those dogs can track shit for miles man", Ron reasoned, "We had better go up in the mountains."

Deidre, totally wiggling out "Yeah, we'll stuff a fucking apple in his mouth and roast him like a fucking pig. Then we can sit around and tell ghost stories, roast marshmallows and stir fry his brains with wild rice and scallions. This is crazy! We'll never get away with it!"

Ed, refusing to give in to hysteria, "Like I said, I get the drumstick."

"No way dude, you promised it to me" Ron interjected.

Ed, returning the humor "Don't worry man, he's got two of 'em."

"SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT THE FUCK UP!" Deidre was losing it bad. Gil walked over to her and gave her a hug. The rest of the group let out a very audible "AAAWWWW".

Gil, trying to motivate everyone, "Let's do it. Let's get his over with. The longer he sits here, the more he rots."

Steven felt a song come on, "Burn baby burn like a disco inferno!"

## Chapter 17

### Incineration

It took all six of them to carry the body to Deidre's car. It was nighttime now, so the neighbors couldn't see what sick and demented things were occurring on their block. They tossed him in the trunk like a flat tire. Blood slopped out of his mouth as he hit the metal, but Ed was the only witness. "Man, check it out, he's fucking puking blood." The others turned to see the cool, ketchup like ooze globulate onto the carpeting.

"Now I have to wash my car!" Deidre realized.

"We'd better burn the carpet from the trunk too. In fact, we'd better be pretty thorough about what get rid of." Gil logicated.

"This sucks" Deidre responded.

They piled into the recently christened hearse and accelerated out of the suburb. First, they went by Rudy's to pick up the boxes. Taking I-70 West, they drove for 2 hours to a spot in the mountains near Vail. There was a babbling brook, and since it was Sunday, no one would probably be camping there until the next Friday. "Let me the fuck out" Ed commanded.

"Ease...this spot looks good, who brought the hot dogs?" Gil jested.

Steven was thirsty, "I need a beer."

"We should go on a beer run while Ed carves the meat." Ron observed.

Deidre was appalled, "I lived with this guy for three years, you're about to cut him up, you already killed him, and all you want to do is drink beer and cook weenies. There is something wrong with all of you. You're all fucked in the head."

Gil tried to throw her a comforting glance, but it was misinterpreted as a gesture of insipidity. "You too Gil, you're fucked in the head too."

"I'm trying to stay sane, everyone else is losing it and I'm just trying to stay sane, so get off my case, woman!" Gil then proceeded to pull out a Marlboro Light and spark it up. Ron had a joint with him, so he enflamed his log of long lung life as well. This was just what they needed. A little sedation after a long day of nearly overdosing, vomiting, murder and Burger King. They piled out and either sat on the hood of the car or stood.

Ed, always thinking, "I wonder if he had any money on him."

"No shit dude, lets check his wallet!" an eager Ron chimed in.

Gil took the keys from Deidre and tossed them to Ed. Turning the key, they found that the beast had bled a lot more on the drive over. The blood looked nearly black against his washed out skin and the tape on his body. The light in the trunk was flickering, and for one brief stoned minute, Ed and Ron could have sworn they saw his eyes open. Ron reached in, through the tape, and pulled out Kyle's wallet. He carried it back to the group before opening it. All eyes were on the leather tri-fold treasure chest. He held it in front of the headlights and parted the seam. Ron opened it as if he were opening the last beer when you are snowed in. It's New Year's Day, and even if you could get out, 7-11 is the only place open, and all they have is 3.2 beer. You refuse to drink 3.2 beer, and the driveway is under about 37 inches of powder. Fortunately, your girlfriend came by last night, and is snowed in with you.

She is generally more fun when she has a couple of beers in her, so you decide to share. You engage the pop-top lever and release the frustrated carbonation that has been exerting pressure on the sides of the aluminum. The damn thing fizzes over and gets on the sheets of the bed where you had been sitting. Not only do you not get any action that day, you don't get a buzz either. At least it wasn't a Coors.

The wallet held a number of laminated rectangles, which at first were thought to be ID cards. Upon closer inspection, Ron noticed that they were recipe cards for different types of drugs. One was for LSD-25, another for Rivets, another for crystal methane, and the final one for Ice. This guy was way deeper into the scene than Deidre even imagined. Shaking, because he knew what this probably meant, Ron pulled the wallet apart, looking for more clues. A business card with a phone number starting with 011- was located in the side pocket. Gil took one look at the overseas prefix and the name, Jorge Escondita, and knew. "We really fucked up", he said solemnly.

"What, what did we fuck up?" Deidre nervously questioned.

Gil explained, "This guy didn't operate alone. He had big connections. Really, really big connections. If you don't think that they're going to miss him you're crazy. We are in deep shit. Fuck the police, we would be better off in jail than hanging around Denver. They're gonna be coming for us real soon."

"I still don't get it, who's coming for us?" Deidre stupidly continued.

"The drug lords. Assassins. We knocked off one of their retailers, they are going to fucking hunt us down and take us out!", Gil lamented.

"Kyle didn't know any drug lords, he couldn't have. I never saw anyone around the house, no one ever called, you're fucking high."

Ed wanted to cover their tracks, "Let's chop his ass up and get rid of him, pronto!"

Steven handed Ed the butcher knife that had been in Deidre's kitchen, and the 5 men pulled the body from the trunk. Deidre retrieved the boxes from the backseat, and began to assemble them. They pulled the body in front of the headlights which were facing the stream. Ed wasted no time.

The first cut was the deepest, and the hardest to stomach. He plunged the silver steel utensil into the abdomen of the beast, right below the ribcage. Deep red, lukewarm blood gushed out onto the ground from the wound. The initial wave of blood sent Deidre to the trees, where she proceeded to vomit as if she had ingested a coffee cup full of bronchial pneumonia lung snot cough up chunks. Ed was unphased. He continued the incision around the sides of the body and rolled the beast onto his back. Hacking through the spine was tougher than he had anticipated. Chopping, like he had a hatchet in his hand, he tried to whittle his way through it, when Cody, who had carved many a chicken in his day, recommended cutting between the joints, through the cartilage. Ed, skeptical, tried, and was pleasantly surprised when the razor sharp blade slid through like it was cutting jello. Now Kyle was in two large halves. Separated right above the waist, he was in two 120 pound segments. What to cut off next. Deidre returned for a moment, then saw the mutilation and ran right back to her favorite barfing tree. Gil went over and continued with the box assembly, preferring to occupy himself rather than witness the grotesque cuisinart job Ed was doing on Kyle's flaccid mortal being. Ed, considering the lack of experience, wasn't doing a half bad job, but his authority over the operation was suddenly and dangerously superseded by mother nature in the form of hungry wolves. They had

smelled the blood, and wanted in on the action. Gil called to Deidre to come back to the car. She ran right by the frenzied wolves, unnoticed. The group packed in the vehicle and silently observed the carnage.

20 or 25 wolves had come from out of the darkness and sprang upon the meatcutters. They ripped at the tape to get at the moist flesh below. One fanatical fellow concentrated on the facial area, chewing sideways on Kyle's nose until there was just a straight shot into the head through the exposed sinus cavity. Six or seven of the wolves jockeyed for position at each open end of the stomach area, where Ed had been working. Liver, spleen, pancreas, gall bladder, intestines, stomach, lungs, heart, kidneys, and quart after quart of blood took turns being fought over. Clothes were little match for the teeth of the hungry animals. They ripped through the jeans Kyle had been wearing, and tore flesh from his pasty white legs. Arriving at the femur, one particularly strong member of the pack bit so hard as to crack the bone circumferentially, exposing the marrow. Taking the non-verbal cue from their larger companion, the remaining leg, both arms, the neck and any number of ribs were devoured in a similar manner.

Ron stared light an elk caught in the headlights, Ed stared like an adolescent watching his first skin flick, Cody like a lobotomized junkie. Gil stared like the first time he saw the cow get chopped in Apocalypse Now, Steven stared like the time he caught his junior high counselor fondling one of his classmates, and Deidre stared like her brain was on pause, no reaction, just a blank stare of disbelief.

The carnage continued, slowly dying down over the next 50 minutes until there were only bones and scraps of clothing as evidence. Ed spoke first, "Well, he'll fit in the box pretty easily now."

Deidre, half crying, half dazed, "Who has a smoke?"

Ron handed her a Marlboro Medium and a light. Deidre, who normally didn't like cigarettes, seemed perfectly at home with this one. "Gil honey, do you really think people will be coming for us?"

"I guarantee it. We need to get you out of that house, and probably out of Denver real quick or you might just never leave."

Deidre, showing a marked change in personality, as if the wolves devouring her ex-boyfriend created closure on a chapter of her life, calmly reasoned, "That's cool, they don't know me, and I don't know them. I'll just change my name, and get a new hairdo. Maybe I'll move in with you for a while, Gil."

Gil, playing it ultra-cool, "Whatever, but I sleep on the left."

He pulled out a cool-stick of his own and set it alight. "I don't think we need to even get rid of this mess, the rain will take care of the blood, and the wolves will probably cart off the rest of the bones. Let's get the fuck out of here."

Cody, feeling his stomach growling again, "All this action has made me hungry. Let's stop somewhere on the way back and eat."

"Yeah, and I've got to take a dump." Ed imposed.

Deidre, noticing a pattern, "You guys sure go to the bathroom a lot, what's up with that?"

"I have a high metabolism." Ed rationalized.

Deidre stabbed back, "Maybe you are just always full of shit." She engaged the drivetrain and pulled out of the campsite. They stopped at the Safeway in Frisco, because it was so

late and Sunday, it was the only place open. Ed had forgotten to wash the blood off his hands, so he waited in the car.

They walked down the well lit aisles, like the Beatles going on stage at the Hollywood Bowl. They were rebels. They were survivors. They were murderers. They had the look. The eyes told the story. Hardened, criminal, pathological murderers. Smoking as they shopped, Ron picked out a can of Lawrey's beef jerky, Cody grabbed two bananas and a day old Deli sandwich. Gil selected a pint of strawberry Quik and a pack of sliced pepperoni, Deidre chose a bag of peanut M&M's, and Steven took a can of guava nectar and a bagel. The majority felt that Ed would prefer the withering italian sausage sandwich from the deli and skim milk.

Once fortified, they went on their way. Ed had found relief behind the dumpster in back of the store. No one asked what he used for toilet paper.

They drove into the cold still night, like a terrible cliché in the making. Trying to reconcile murder and religion was not an easy task. Voltaire claimed that this was the best of all possible worlds, but Gil was beginning to wonder. He could come up with a few improvements, like cheaper drinks, more girls with bigger boobs and cigarettes that didn't make you feel like shit the next day. Best of all possible worlds my ass. Deidre was just trying to reconcile her sudden freedom with her female codependent tendencies. She felt that she wanted to, and should be with Gil, but she also didn't want to just cling because she was alone. Ron was trying to reconcile the lighter in his hand and the joint in his mouth. He couldn't get the damn thing lit. Flick flick, the lighter was cooked. Cody came through with a match. Steven, who considered himself religious, was by far the most distraught. He was the one who had inflicted the fatal blow. He would be the first to the gates of hell. Satan would have a heyday with old Steven. Pitchforks up your ass and fire shooting out of your unit. What had he

done. Cody was trying to reconcile being scared shitless and sleepy, he would close his eyes, but he just couldn't crash. Ed was trying to eat without spilling anything.

## Chapter 18

### Destination

They arrived back at Cody and Ed's place as the sun was coming up. What a fucked up night they all thought. Steven and Ron both left right away and said they would be in touch tomorrow. Cody and Ed went upstairs to crash. Gil took Deidre by the hand and walked her to his car. He opened the door for her, which impressed her tremendously, and even closed it behind her. Of course this was all very conscious, as none of these courtesies came naturally to a man's man like Gil. He drove slowly, gripping her hand for the duration of the trip. Bleary eyed, they stumbled into Gil's bed and fell quickly asleep.

Gil was awakened by the sound of Deidre coming out of the shower. She was back to her beautiful young nubile self. Deidre noticed that Gil was wide awake. Not by the look in his eyes, but by the teepee that had been erected in the sheets. She dropped her towel and climbed under the covers with him. She kissed him slowly, while he sat still, waiting to see what would happen. She touched him softly in all the right places. Slithering up to his ear, she began to whisper when...hic...she began to...hic...hiccup uncontrollably. Holding her breath didn't work. Concentrating didn't work. She got up to get a drink of water, and Gil realized he needed to use the restroom. By the time her spasms subsided, Gil was dressed and ready for the day. The moment was lost.

Ring ring "Hello" Gil answered.

"Hey man, when do you need me to bring the truck by?" It was Rudy. "I thought you would call by now. I have it ready to go."

Gil, trying to be succinct, "Change in plans man, he ended up being dinner for a pack of wolves, there's nothing left to burn, but thanks anyway, it's good to know we could count on you man."

"Wolves? I don't wanna know how that happened. Get a hold of me. Later."

"Late." Gil disconnected. He turned his attention to Deidre who was saying sorry with her big blue eyes. "We need to take care of your shit today. We'd better get what you need out of your house, and get rid of any evidence."

"I know, I just don't want to deal with all this yet."

"We have to do it right away, who knows who is expecting Kyle to be somewhere. We probably only have a day or so before people get suspicious." Gil reasoned."

"Alright, but we have a little time don't we?" Deidre wondered.

"Yeah, we always have a little time. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

Deidre, not wanting to make a fool of herself again, "That depends."

Gil, wondering why Deidre would be so suddenly aloof, "Oh it does, does it. Well I was thinking that..." Deidre walked over slowly and wrapped her unclothed body around Gil's, as Gil guided the two of them to the sleep chamber. She pushed him on his back, grabbed his belt and with one quick motion, removed it from the loops. Gil had nothing to take off of her, so he let her continue. Deidre undid the middle two buttons of Gil's shirt and slid her warm hands inside, rubbing his chest passionately. Gil grabbed Deidre by the hips, which happened to be right on his lap, and pulled her toward him. She got the hint and undid his trousers,

pulling them down to his knees. Once his torso was exposed, she slid back down to their original position, but got a little bonus along the way. They looked deep into each others eyes at the moment of impact, and knew it was love. The next 136 minutes were occupied with steamy sweaty intercourse in over 23 different positions. They did stop twice to get water, and once to split a cigarette. Exhaustion set in, and they drifted lazily back to sleep.

This time Gil woke up first. He crept out of bed into the dark. It was night now. The clock read 9:34pm. Gil assumed it to be correct, and went to the kitchen to try to wake up. Deidre, noticing her lover was gone, draped herself in the blanket and walked out the door to the kitchen light. "Hey sweetie, how are you feeling?" she asked.

"Like superman, how about you?"

"Like Lois Lane. Guess what."

Gil wondered what she was getting at, "What?"

"I love you."

"Really? Well I love you to." They embraced, and after having had so much rest were ready for a little more action. This time the kitchen counter was their bed, and they only utilized 2 positions, but this was more than satisfactory.

They took a shower together and got dressed. Every time their eyes met, they gave each other knowing glances, acknowledging that they had found something special.

Gil brought the mood closer to reality, "This would be a good time to go get your stuff, while it's dark out."

"Yeah, you're right, lets go do it. I need to get some clothes and things. All of the furniture was his, and the

house was rented in his name, so it will be easy to get rid of any traces of me. If the police find me and ask where he is, I'll say I moved out last week and moved in with you."

"Cool, let's get" Gil responded.

## Chapter 19

### Perspiration

At this point there should have probably been a greater amount of tension felt, considering the limited number of positive outcomes available to them, but being eternally optimistic about life when he has a girlfriend, Gil reasoned that everything would sort of work itself out.

The street made the car hop while in transit, as if popcorn were popping under the wheels. Deidre was like warm butter, and maybe a dash of salt. His car is a giant popcorn bowl, let's see what's on TV tonight.

The radio was attempting to organize the signal into something coherent but all that came out was some kind of intergalactic solar flare aurora borealis gamma ray nonsense. Death wasn't exactly Gil's favorite pastime. In fact, although inevitable and final, Gil felt somehow wary of death, as if it were something to be avoided rather than glorified. The thought of being very old and sad was quite uncomfortable as well, and for a split second he thought about dumping Deidre before she went and died on him, leaving him lonely, when all of his friends have long since moved away or died too. That figures, he thought, I would live the longest, just to end up being the saddest. He didn't want this to happen at all, so he reached in his pocket and pulled out a cigarette. Lighting it and sucking deep, holding the smoke in his lungs almost to the point of passing out, he let out a brutal cough.

"Slow down honey, what are you trying to do to yourself."  
Deidre quizzed.

Gil knew the answer, and he knew that Deidre wouldn't like the answer, therefore he made up a new one, "Fuck if I know."

Deidre looked at him as if she knew the real answer, knew Gil was lying, but somehow understood where he was coming from.

Unfortunately Gil wasn't comforted by this look because he missed it entirely.

They pulled up to the house about 11 p.m. All Deidre had to do was grab a few things and split, but Gil knowing the female psyche from an unbiased and estrogen free perspective knew that would be way too fucking easy. "Where do I start" she rhetorically inquired.

"Why don't you fix me a sandwich." he sarcastically retorted.

"Why don't you lick my clamwich." she punctuated.

"I'll empty your dresser if you get your shit out of the bathroom."

The oak drawers opened slowly, revealing an almost fanatical obsession with lingerie. Images of their sweaty future filled the brain of our hero, somehow, almost mystically, looking for a way out, the thoughts tried to exit through the favorite member of his team. But, being thoughts, they simply backed up and filled the star player until he rose to salute, almost reverentially, the beautiful collection of silk hampers.

Gil filled a King Soopers bag with underpants and over the shoulder hooter holders. Deidre came running in. "What the fuck is taking you so long?"

Shocked by the outburst, Gil surmised, "I was having a flashback."

Deidre, flattered that her bump and grind could give a man post traumatic stress disorder, wryly smiled.

"If you don't put that thing away, we're not gonna get shit done." Deidre threatened as she gave mister a little squeeze.

A pulse shot through the nervous system of Gil and triggered an involuntary response. He thought about burning his draft card, because he didn't like being told what to do, especially when it came to this, but knowing the source, he reasoned that it was all in good taste. And he knew that she would taste good. There is an almost magical quality to being with someone you understand. Gil being truly non-spiritual was amazed that he even had this kind of thought in the face of reason, but since fate seems to have intervened, maybe fate would get him some. He grabbed Deidre's hair just hard enough to let her know he was in control, but that she was safe with him. Deidre, never really caring for the role of aggressor, quickly submitted.

Strobe lights flashed as the curtain rose revealing the racks of sound reinforcement on standby. The kick drum pulsed as if doing a sound check, but this was the beginning of the show and everyone knew it. A guitar scratched the air which was almost malleable from the marijuana smoke. As soon as the delay from Gibson's finest had been absorbed by the acoustic tile, the bass set out on a mission to find a groove, lock on, and work the crowd into a frenzy. At first, heads bobbed, toes tapped, but with the ever increasing intensity of the drumbeat, people began to stir, dancing broke out, not charitable, lackadaisical bandstand dancing, but twisted, ritualistic, tribal dancing, uncontrolled and unstoppable. The singer screamed, making the bridge of Baba O'Riley seem trite by comparison. Flash pots exploded, lasers shot out at the ceiling and the stage caught fire. Ironically the bed had also caught fire from the cigarette Gil had failed to fully snuff. This made their fucking all the more insane. Trying to finish the gig before the whole concert hall went up in smoke, Gil increased the tempo to somewhere around 184 beats per minute, which led Deidre to the most intense, gripping, overwhelming orgasm she had ever imagined. Gil, knowing

what was happening through no actual reasoning joined her in her ecstasy.

By this point, the room was engulfed in smoke and fire. Gil pulled up his pants, Deidre buttoned her blouse and they ran out the door. The car fired right up, as if it had stayed warm, anticipating disaster. Gil noticed that the house was fired up too. Glowing yellow and orange like chewed up skittles, the window broke and flames tickled shake shingles. Black rubber leapt out from behind the car as they sped down the block.

Ron usually didn't mind late night visitors, so they swung by his house to see if he had any bright ideas. Confused but intense, Ron surmised that some of Deidre's belongings would be traceable to her and that the fire department would take fifteen hours to send out an alert to the police to try to contact her. They would also be looking for Kyle, whom they would assume started the fire since he was male, but all of this was contingent on the fact that no one saw Gil drive away from the scene as the chaos ensued. Being late and a school night to boot, they had to assume the best. Deidre had been loading the pipe this whole time and lit it as Ron finished his diatribe. Inhaling deeply, she drifted slowly into a childlike state of wonder bread and spaghettiios. Gil, being pretty hungry himself, partook in the native american ritual and found himself high on the plateau looking down on the cliff dwellings thinking, "Life is good, buffalo are many, summer is long and squaw is a hottie."

The sun beat down on the village as delicious pemmican was fashioned into loaves for the warriors. All days should be as wonderful as this, the people collectively decided. Moccasins tapped to rhythms reminiscent of the Chili Peppers, when a low rumble was first felt by the women washing the skid marks out of loin cloths by the stream. There wasn't a cloud in the Colorado sky that day, so it couldn't be thunder. It must be the coming of the bison. Warriors mounted their steeds in due anticipation of the

ensuing feast. As the men left the camp, women readied the village for tanning and cooking. This perfect day just got better. Proud, fearless indians raced over the surrounding hills, screaming joyous screams of imminent victory. This was to be their first and last contact with the union army.

Women and children would not be spared, only a single frightened teenage girl made it to the next tribe to tell of the slaughter. The other tribe, being blood enemies, and quite skeptical, burned her at the stake. Had they listened, two moons later they might have been prepared, but unfortunately they suffered the same fate. As with the tribes who survived the genocide, Deidre was beginning to have her reservations. Since she didn't have the means to build casinos and generate relatively tax free income, her future was looking bleak.

Paranoia comes in waves when you smoke dope. One moment everything is peachy, and the next, everything is prunes, but you are always a vegetable. Gil touched Deidre's shaking hand, and suddenly things were cool again.

Gil suggested, "Maybe I should get you home."

"Please do, I've got to relax."

"Later Ron." Gil disassociated.

"Bye, thanks for everything." Deidre reassured.

"Give me a buzz tomorrow" Ron reacted.

The drive home was silent. Sometimes the last thing you want to hear is music. Music can bring make a good mood great, and a sad mood suicidal, but if you are fucking irritable, it can send you over the fucking edge. The radio stayed off.

Nothing was said, but many thoughts were considered. Gil calculated their relative chances, which after deliberation

seemed to him to be less than the chance of the Buccaneers winning the super bowl this century. Deidre imagined a world without death. On the surface, it made her smile. You could just be with the people you love all the time, never having to say goodbye, never having to be scared. Then she thought a little deeper, what would make people strive to improve themselves when it could always be postponed to another day. What would a day be anyhow, they wouldn't even measure things in days, there would be no point to anything, no reason to work, no reason to excel, no reason, death is they key to life. The fact that it always comes too soon sucks, but the fact that it comes eventually is truly cause to celebrate. Deidre wondered what she would be able to think about when she died. Would she be able to play back her memories like a juke box, reliving moments of her life, or is there another world left to conquer where she might run into God, or any of the others she hoped to meet. The only other option is a big empty void. The thought of a void is less than comforting. The thought of being conscious of this void after death is the most horrible thing imaginable. She decided death could wait for another day, there were too many things left to take care of before she split for infinity.

Chunk chunk, the car ran on even though the keys were in hand and the door was opening. Ffft, it stopped. Gil said blearily, "Let's crash."

Deidre decided to give in to the sleep gods and take her chances in the void.

Beautiful, swirling, out of scale patterns glowed on the inside of her eyelids for a full three seconds before the dream weaver took the helm. Gil burned one last cig and curled up next to her, wanting the moment to last, and being very good at forgetting that time is furiously running away from him, it lasted a long long time.

## Chapter 20

### Desecration

People forget how far away they really go when they sleep. If they thought a little more about it, it might turn them into incurable insomniacs. You are so completely vulnerable, yet in light of the situation, Deidre just purred quietly away.

Her dreams really weren't dreams, they were more like extremely repetitive thoughts of death. Resembling a CD that is skipping on a Deicide album, right on the part where he says die for the 73rd time. Die, die, die, die, die, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock...

Gil woke first, the sun was already coloring the inside of his corneal covers pink, so he lifted them to find his apartment a holy mess, but there was Deidre, still happily asleep, although spasmodically twitching. He pulled a blanket off the bed and wrapped himself like a cheese enchilada. Who the fuck was knocking at this hour, and what time was it anyway. He cracked the door and peeked out.

The glint from her teeth nearly blinded him. It was his new neighbor Terri. She looked concerned, so considering the fact that he had finally consummated his relationship with the prettiest girl who was still asleep in the apartment, he asked, "Hey, what's up?"

"The apartment manager came by and said she saw your dog impaled on the fence below your window, but you weren't home, so she asked me to give you the message. Is everything O.K.?"

"Yeah, I know, I haven't had time to go clean up the mess. I'll give her a call in a while."

"You must be heartbroken, is there anything I can do?" she sincerely inquired.

Gil, with dulled senses muttered, "No, just promise me you won't buy a dachshund."

He closed the door, which really represented a gateway to reality. They were safe in his cocoon. Deidre and Gil, hibernating for the winter like two brown bears in British Columbia. Bellies full of salmon and a dry cave. What more could you ask for. Too bad the mining operation had moved in. What did they want with gold. You can't eat it, it doesn't make very good weapons or utensils, and you can hardly ever find enough of it to use. No matter, the company wanted all that they could get their hands on. It only took one stick of dynamite to awaken their genetically predisposed sleep pattern. That's right, awake, just in time to see the front of the cave get sealed off by boulders and dirt. The phone rang. He forgot he had a phone, seeing as how his paws made it difficult to dial.

"Yeah"

"Hey, Gil, this is Ed, man, someone has been driving by our house all morning, I think they see Deidre's car out front, but they can't figure out which place she's in."

"We'll come right over as soon as I can wake her up." Gil reassured.

Deidre was twitching more than before, so Gil held her hand and woke her.

She explained, "I has the worst dream, all I could think about was Rivets. Where is my purse, I need a couple."

She spotted her purse and non-verbally talked Gil into getting it off the dresser and bringing it over with a glass of water and a cigarette. A lot of information to cram into one look, but hey, they were soul mates.

"Why don't you take a few less than normal, these aren't going to last long as it is, and the rest just went up in smoke." he recommended.

Deidre, understanding that this was probably a good idea, obliged. The rivets stopped the shaking in her cold hands. The cigarette stopped the shaking in her brain, and the water tasted better than a chocolate shake from Dairy Queen.

Gil, trying to be persuasive without being pushy spoke, "We need to go get your car from Ed and Cody's, there has been someone circling around their place all morning, and they are getting nervous."

"How would he know it was my car, who would it even be, I told you I never met any of Kyle's drug buddies."

"Don't ask me, I just know that we had better go by there before something happens."

Not knowing what was actually happening there was truly comforting to Gil. Although he didn't know he was being comforted, he surely was, because if he knew what was going on, the word uncomfortable would be a sickening understatement. Ignorance is bliss. That means over ninety percent of the general population must be ecstatic with their fucking intolerable ignorance. The most dangerous ones are the ones that think they are knowledgeable and don't know fact one. I'll tell you what's in your best interest, to please yourself, that's it, end of list. The ignorant among you certainly interpret that as a license for selfishness, but you miss the point. The point is that if you are pleased by fucking other people over, then you are fucked in the first place. To please yourself, you need to be loved, and the only way to get that is to love other people, but mind you, only those others who deserve love, because when it's a one way street, you always get run over.

And when you are out on the street, drive an armored personnel carrier, not only to protect yourself, but to

squish any fucking insect that tries to blow your high. Many a day goes by when it's easy to hate the world, and think that everybody is fucked. Well for the record, not everyone is fucked, only the vast majority. Deidre snapped her fingers and brought Gil back to earth.

"Let's get going honey, I left some important things in the Grand Prix."

## Chapter 21

### Assassination

The ugly yellow front door was angrily slapping the wall behind it. The wind blew the newspaper around the living room in a mock dust devil. Why would they leave the door open. Nervously, Bonnie and Clyde of the Barrio crept to the entrance.

Gil hollered in, "Ed, Cody, you guys home?"

No answer, Deidre went first. Nothing special in the living room except a pile of Taco Bell hot sauce packs, one smelly shoe, and the remote control in a glass of beer. Gil motioned to Deidre to follow him to the second floor. Ed's door was also wide open. Gil peeked around. What he saw can hardly be imagined. Ed was lying in bed naked with a sheet pulled over himself, a single gunshot to the face. Cody, apparently hiding under the sheets, also naked, with a flashlight in his hand and a gunshot to the base of the head, was lifeless as well. Gil's first reaction was more instinctive than mortified. "I can't believe these two were fags! They were playing flashlight games beneath the sheets. This is fucking sick, let's get out of here."

Deidre didn't hesitate. This is something she would hear about on a talk show, not have to see in living color. Then it struck her that whomever killed them was looking for her. She reached in her handbag and retrieved two more rivets. Mildly sedated on ingestion, she was ready to go. How had they found her car, what gave it away?

Kyle hadn't bought a house in Englewood for no reason, he had many friends on the police force. In Englewood though, the police weren't there to serve and protect, they were there to extort and collect. Kyle had installed a satellite locator on Deidre's car when he put in the new engine. She had no idea, but she did have an idea that her car had been

searched. The bloody bumper led her eyes to the trunk latch. The deep grey scratches and flakes of paint made it obvious that it had been pried open recently. She opened the front door, pulled her lighter, insurance papers, and a bag of over 50 rivets from the glove box. "We had better take your car, this one is a mess, besides, somebody is looking for it."

Logic was Gil's forte. This seemed logical, and it was. Wogging to the Buick, they jumped in and sped north on Federal. Ring. Ring. Where the fuck did that come from. Gil looked startled and anticipatory. Deidre calmly pulled the cell phone from her purse and answered. "Hello."

An unknown, impatient voice spoke, "We know who you are, we know who you're with, now tell us where to find Kyle, or you are going to be in big trouble. He owes us more than a little money, and somebody is going to pay."

Deidre, after years of bullshitting guys, knew how to handle threats, "Kyle split two days ago and I haven't heard from him. You can have my car, that's the only thing I own. He didn't say when he is coming back."

Screaming, "His fucking Camaro is in front of what's left of your house, now tell me where the fuck he is or I'll fucking kill you!" Just as Deidre prepared a response, a car smashed into the back bumper of Gil's vehicle. Deidre spun around and looked right into the eyes of Ed and Cody's assassin.

"Fuck you" she eloquently bawled into the transmitter while simultaneously throwing it into the back seat. "Fucking step on it Gil, he's right behind us."

Gil was unaware of the exact text of the conversation, but judging from the timing of the speeding car slamming into his rear end, and Deidre's phonerific soliloquy, he stomped the gas to the floorboard like a delicious young Italian

girl making wine. I hope everybody washed their feet before they got in here, I have to drink this stuff. The feeling of grapes between your toes is one of completeness. No big machines, no fancy factory, just feet and grapes, grapes and feet. Squish, squish, squish. It would be worth having purple feet for a week or so to enjoy many months of vino. And what a harvest this year. The hills were exploding with vines. And look how cute Alexandra looks with the warm grape juice on her lacy white shirt. Her nipples are hard, yet it's eighty degrees outside. Could she be enjoying this as much as me? She's smiling at me, I think I'll hold her hand. She gives an extra little squeeze to Alexandra's gripper as Alexandra smears grape juice on her neck. The townspeople are beginning to pick up on the erotic nature of this annual event when the dormant volcano comes back to life for the first time in 2300 years. Unaware of the imminent danger, the two beautiful girls fall together into the vat as the people run for shelter. They embrace as thick scorching lava freezes them in place for eternity. Gil took a hard right.

It actually wasn't hard for Gil, but the vehicle pursuing him was caught surprisingly off guard and drove through the glass front of the Payless Shoe Store. Deidre applauded loudly and turned up the radio. Jane's Addiction was singing about nothing being shocking. The irony went in one ear, out the other, off the window, back in the latter ear, and finally rested in her cerebral cortex. "You know honey," she cooed, "I'm kind of getting used to all the violence. I think we should get a hotel room and fuck."

Gil, never being one for pottie mouthed women, looked at Deidre with something resembling disgust and disappointment. "How old did you say you were again?"

"Oh, lighten up Gil, you know what I mean."

Gil decided that maybe he had taken himself a bit too seriously and pulled into the very next motel he could find.

"Well, we should probably park around back in case someone is looking for my car. This sure turned into a fucked up couple of days. The other day, my biggest worry was whether Shotzy had worms."

Deidre gave little Gilly a squeeze and batted her bedroom eyes. Gil went and took care of the accommodations while Deidre prettied herself up. They retired to the rented abode, leaving the blinds drawn so as not to be reminded of the ugliness which is south Federal Boulevard. Gil reconsidered his choice of motels, but he learned long ago to strike when the irony is hot. And was it ever. He feared that if he left his pants on too long his zipper would melt shut. Deidre was drunk with anticipation. She also had a pint of Wild Turkey in her purse. Gil inquired, "Where did that come from?"

"Oh, I grabbed it when we stopped at my house. I figured we might need it, especially when the rivets wear off..." Ed had once driven a Ford (first mistake) Maverick (second through fifth mistakes). There was an incessant rattling in the hub caps which Ed had been too lazy to check. When Gil asked him what was causing it, Ed replied "Oh, someone put rocks in my hubcap." Gil wondered why anyone would do that, and why he hadn't already thought of doing that, and decided to investigate. It turned out that one of the five original lug nuts was still in place, the other four had managed to work themselves loose. Ed replaced the uncooperative bolts and, since it was national car maintenance week, with Gil's help, popped the hood. "Where do you check the oil dude?" Gil pointed to the dipstick, the one in the engine, and Ed read it. "It looks pretty low." It was pretty low, but Ed proceeded to put four fresh quarts of oil in, and from that day on, an almost I Dream Of Jeannie-like blue cloud followed the green machine everywhere it went. Gil was developing a major headache and a major stiffie, so he decided to put Deidre in a Major Nelson. This gave her a Major Healey, during which she let out some Major Bellows (for those of you keeping score, I know it was Doctor

Bellows, but that didn't fit) (for three points extra credit, write a paragraph on what constitutes a major healey and send it to the publisher). Someone from the next room pounded on the wall, presumably to invoke silence. It didn't work.

After a short, but extremely satisfying twilight sleep, Deidre's eye-skin parted. Christmas lights danced for a moment until focus arrived. She tried to squint, and dream of her favorite holiday, but the moment was passed. So was some gas from Gil's taco filled ass. Deidre smacked Gil with a pillow, which proceeded to encourage him to return from dreamland, A.S.A.P. Speaking of irony, it was ironic that part of the national nuclear test site was named Dreamland. Einstein must have been able to reach so deeply into the abstract portion of his consciousness, that he could literally invert reality. At the time of his insights, there was no such thing as space travel, but he dreamed of sitting on the edge of a black hole and watching time run away. Instead, he sat alone in a room, and watched, over and over again, the film loop of a mushroom cloud high over the desert. "Well," he reasoned, "I guess I should have kept that one to myself." And so should Gil have. Deidre's eyes began to water from the noxious fumes which permeated the thin, well worn, motel sheet fabric. She leapt from the bed, and in the process, let out a little foul air from between her cheeks. Gil couldn't help but hum Bad Moon Rising. Deidre followed her nose, or actually ran from her nose, to the stall. There she encountered a monogrammed towel. The initials CCR were stitched into the teri-cloth. Assuming, and correctly I might add, that someone had left it there by mistake, she threw it in the small beige plastic trash can next to the dump station.

Although the can had a strip of white paper hugging the lid, Deidre noticed a green-brown ring on the inside lip. Suddenly her telephone let out a sound to warn of an incoming call. She nearly shit her pants, but they were a

good four feet away. "Gil, what should I do, should I answer it?"

"You might as well, but don't talk long, I think they can probably trace the signal if you let them."

The most beautiful girl in the pisser caught the cell phone from our hero and folded down the flap to accept the call.

## Chapter 22

### Concentration

"This is D."

The telephone shook, then spoke, "Young lady, you obviously know we can find you when we want to. If you want to get out of this mess you're in, alive, tell us where to find either Kyle or the eighty-thousand he owes."

"First of all, I had no idea until yesterday that Kyle was into all this shit. He always had cash, but I never saw any eighty thousand dollars. If it was hidden, it's dust now. Second of all, like I told whoever was chasing me, I haven't seen him in two days." Deidre felt a subtle and fleeting sigh of relief, as if she had gotten something major off her chest, but looking down, she noticed a major hickey. "Gil, you asshole!"

"Who's Gil, is that the guy who's driving you around? Well, my friends on the force shouldn't have too much trouble finding him with a stupid fucking name like that. As I was saying..." a shocked Deidre terminated the call.

Astonished by her lack of common sense, Gil declared, "Why in the fuck did you scream my fucking name, what's wrong with you?"

"It's your fault, look at these marks!" An obvious response, but truly accurate. The female of the species seems to have a poor adrenaline threshold. They don't convert the raw energy into something useful, like anger, they tend to let it out as soon as it enters the brain. Thus, rather than admit fault, they will spend hours trying to justify the most inane, flippant comment, even if it means dredging up something that happened weeks, even years before. Gil was well aware of this major character flaw, but chose to live with it, seeing as how his only other choice was celibacy.

Gil thought out loud, "Well fuck, now we can't even go to my place. What the fuck are we gonna do?"

Deidre suggested, "Why don't we just call the police. It's about time, and we need someone else's help."

"Well I guess it couldn't get us into much more trouble. Besides, Steven is the one who actually killed Kyle, but we could blame it on Ed and Cody since they're history." Gil logically assumed.

I was night now. Deidre, contemplating years in prison, briefly considered suicide. Even though suicide is the most profoundly irrational thing a human animal can do, unless you have considered it, even briefly, you are not human. This was not the first time Deidre had thought about it. She thought about it every day she spent with Kyle, but now, looking at a well worn, but still intensely masculine Gil, something deep inside her told her that, even though they would die eventually, there would be a few more good times in store, and it was worth the wait. Besides, she reasoned, Kyle would probably be waiting for her in hell. "We'd better keep moving. Let's go down to the police station. There's one right near my house."

They readied themselves for what might be their final foray into the real world. Out the doors lied not the unknown, but a truly known quantity, of scum. Piles of scum. Do you know how much scum is involved? Just open your fucking eyes. Scum is everywhere and nearly everything. People are scum. Almost everyone you meet has scum on the brain and diarrhea of the mouth. People think rotten thoughts and say complete shit. Nobody is on your side and you fucking know it. That's why it hurts so bad when you get burned by the opposite sex. After years of looking and imagining, you think you found someone you can really open your heart up to. So you do. Why, because you let your guard down. You want to let your guard down, it feels unhealthy to keep all

of your most personal thoughts to yourself. You don't know how they stack up to other people's, you don't know if they are even valid, so you have to discuss your pathetic situation (i.e. the human condition) with anyone who seems interested. Sure she'll be interested, as long and you're driving, and picking up the tab, and opening her door, and kissing her ass. That is until someone new comes along. Everyone wants to trade up. New and improved scum. Roll-on scum, advanced stain-fighting scum, scum with extra flavor crystals, ultra-absorbent scum. Just keep the fucking diarrhea, laxative and tampon commercials to yourself until I'm done eating, but that's what you get for watching TV. You get exactly what you fucking deserve, non-stop world-wide international 24 hour seven day a week regurgitated processed sterilized glorified quantitized homogenized strip mall shopping scum. So go fuck yourself.

Gil suddenly realized he was setting himself up for another infamous letdown with a woman. What would be the cause of the end of this relationship? The possibilities were endless. Deidre came over and kissed him on the cheek as she opened the motel door. Well maybe this time would be different. He could already hear Bread songs playing in his head. I said go fuck yourself.

The walk to the car was short, but felt like waiting to get into the dentist's chair. No routine check-up this time. This was the third visit this month, and they still haven't fixed the problem. Why even ask anymore, just pull 'em all and give me a slurpee. That'll be two-hundred and forty-one dollars. Do you want to pay by check or cash? Her freshly painted fingernails hold the bill in front of your swollen face. You are too numb to snarl at her and only manage to wink, which she takes as a come-on and does the snarling for you.

Stuck neatly under the wiper was a ticket for parking too close to a hydrant. Gil, feeling like he would probably die before his court date, removed the summons and, in a mock

ass-wiping motion, disposed of it. Deidre giggled, she knew there was a reason she loved this guy.

As always, the Buick fired up on the first try. Gil lowered the shifter to engage the transmission, but there was no motion. A quick check of the emergency brake revealed no obvious problem. The transmission fought against the forces, but no luck. Gil, distracted by the parking ticket, had failed to notice the giant lead boot that had been attached to his left front tire. Perfect, he thought.

"Hey honey, let me borrow your cell phone so I can call Ron to come get us."

"Here you go, just push power, dial, then push send." Deidre educated.

Ever reliable, the phone too fired up on the first try. A semi lucid voice hiccuped in Gil's ear, "Hello?!"

"Ron, this is Gil man, we need you to come get us. It's a long story, but my car got the boot, and we have no way of getting anywhere."

"No shit, where are you now?"

Gil responded, "At the Motel 6 up on Federal. Can you do it?"

"Yeah man, just give me time for a few more hits and I'll split" Ron reassured.

Gil, looking at the prettiest girl in the parking lot, "He's on his way."

## Chapter 23

### Explanation

Ron cruised up to the curb in the tall silver GMC. It was so tall that lesbians hated it. No upside down pink triangle or rainbow stickers allowed. Deidre consumed two rivets and climbed onto the hump. Gil smiled and squished her into an even more uncomfortable position in the front of the cab.

Ron pulled into Conoco. Gas was deposited in the fuel cell, while Gil went in to pay. Behind the counter was the most retarded looking creature he'd ever seen. Something right out of juvenile hall. The punk had the nerve to ID Gil for cigarettes. Gil shrugged it off as a joke, but the kid was relentless. By the third comment, Gil had had just about enough. He threw his Snapple and caught dude square in the nose. A burst of raspberry iced tea mixed with bright red nostril blood made the pale yellow walls come alive. Glass flew around the booth as dude hit the tiles. Looking up, Gil noticed a security camera. Maybe they wouldn't need a ride to the police station after all. Hurriedly, he motioned for Ron to terminate the gas installation procedures and get the fuck out of there. That is exactly what happened.

Ron, being pretty lit, drove south on Wadsworth, and accidentally drove right past the security gate of Martin Marietta (a well known defense contractor and nuclear missile builder in southwest suburban Denver). For some reason, the lights had been off and no one was on guard. A cool mist filled the vehicle. Gil figured it was the heater core acting up, but Ron assured him that there were very few miles on the engine and that a heater problem was extremely unlikely. Deidre felt something tickle the back of her neck. Assuming it was Gil, she smiled playfully. They drove further up the road when a bright light filled the open doorway of a building that resembled the Saturn 5 assembly building at Cape Canaveral. Ron stood on the

brakes. All three watched in amazement as extremely symmetrical sparks of light buzzed the area in tight formations.

Ron and Deidre were fascinated. Gil was in utter shock. He knew, all too well, the odds of life on other planets, not to mention visitors. The other two passengers were more open minded about it, not knowing that statistically speaking, some life form would have to live to be at least 100,000 years old to make the journey to Earth, and that's traveling close to the speed of light! Feeling a bit overwhelmed, Deidre asked Ron for a light. Ron not only obliged, but gave her joint too. Gil, insanely restless, but scared shitless, took the doo-be and sparked it up. He normally wasn't named Humphrey (as in bogart), but tonight he was. He sucked that fucking joint to a nub in two long drags. Thick grey smoke came out his ears. Deidre, anxious to cash in, attacked Gil's mouth in a mock French kiss to get her hands on some second hand smoke. Second hand smoke is not even remotely bad for you. If people were really concerned about what they breathe, they would stop driving. Hypocrisy runs deep and wide in the world, but the second hand smoke issue might just be the pinnacle. Go back forty years, to what is commonly known as the "good old days," and try to find one reference to second hand smoke. So who invented it, because we know damn well that it didn't exist until about 1981. It was the fucking government. The government, being like a spoiled rich kid, didn't get it's way on some piece of tobacco taxation legislation, so they invented second hand smoke. Not to protect people from a dangerous pollutant, like that ever happens, but to punish the tobacco companies. And, Gil suddenly realized, this same government was hiding something, potentially catastrophic from the public. Life. From another world.

Ron, kind of annoyed with Gil, but understanding (and well stocked) spun the truck around and sped back through the entrance. Forgetting that there had been those fold down spikes to prevent just such a departure, the tires, in near-

unison exploded. Within a second, the sparks zoomed into the building, the hangar door shut, and floodlights engulfed the area. Two dark, government blue Hummers sped up to meet them. All considered running, but knew the futility. Besides, all they could get them for was trespassing.

Submission is occasionally the only reasonable course of action. Giving in to authority tore at Gil's soul like Ed used to tear through the bag to get at his items from Taco Bell. The hummers shined brilliant white light on Ron's silver steed, and two pretty stupid white males emerged from the second hummer. It was far too late to try to stash the goods or remove the smoke from the interior space, so against their instincts, they all submitted.

Stepping sheepishly from the car, Gil approached the smaller of the two men. "We took a wrong turn and blew out all four tires."

Small man turned to large man, nodded feverishly and drew his pistol. Ron and Deidre, being aware of the gravity of the situation, expediently exited the truck and threw themselves at the mercy of the boys in blue. A step above mall security, due to their weapons permit rather than intelligence, the guards had very little in the way of a sense of humor. Smelling the pungent strains of indica noodling through the air they suddenly had a simultaneous craving for chinese. "You owdah, you goa way. No fohtshoon cookie fo yoo." Succulent cubes of pork in a beveled plate of lomeini. Swimsuit-model-brown spring rolls and a half-sphere of delicate fried rice. Eat it all with chopsticks, then throw your plate in the air in celebration. "Put your hands up," large man demanded.

Almost forgetting their near miss with another world, Gil, still blindly optimistic, inquired, "What's this all about, we made an honest mistake, we just need to call a tow truck or something."

Deidre, being a woman, and therefore believing innately that she can talk most men into anything chimed in, "Yeah."

"Get in the vehicle," large man asserted.

Once inside, Ron lit a cigarette. Though this is utterly unthinkable in light of the current damnation of anything involving tobacco use, their chauffeurs did not even take notice. Gil, emboldened by Ron's lack of deference, for the last time tried to engage in a reasonable discussion. "Where are you taking us?"

Driving the opposite direction of where the lights had been seen, they found themselves on a treacherous, well rutted, overgrown trail. The road wound around, past fences, near water, completely illogically for what seemed 73 minutes. Gil had a way of keeping track of time when things became intolerably dull. Simply play back an entire CD in your head. Cut by cut, allowing 4 seconds between, and, if it is typical, it will come out to around 55 minutes. One-fifth of the way into the second CD of the night, Gil had not noticed that he was thinking the music way too fast. Using his heart rate as a metronome, he typically played things on time, but not in this heightened state. Regardless, they drove for a pretty good distance, until suddenly small man stopped.

"Get out, get lost, and forget everything. The truck will be on the side of the road a mile north of the entrance tomorrow morning. Follow this trail for another 4 miles and you will get to Highway 285. Don't try to go back the way we came."

Seeming acceptable enough, and a much nicer outcome than had been imagined, the tired, distraught threesome set out. Walking through the woods gives you a sense of the amount of nature of which we are totally unaware. Years of suburban laziness had taken the edge off of the coping skills honed by evolution. They were more than a little intimidated. It

was a hesitant walk. Four miles should have only taken two hours, but instead lasted six.

Greeted by the highway and the rising sun at roughly the same time, a calming glow draped itself on their faces. Wind tugged at the vortices of their lips and nearly caused smiles. Traffic, ah the soothing sounds of progress. How meditative. Gil, utterly contemplative, felt truly rejuvenated upon seeing the ribbon of tarmac. Like glorious little balls of firefly magic, headlights glowed in the crisp dawn. Carbon monoxide breathed deeply and obscured the horrible trees. Deidre shook up and down to the joy of the driver in the cream colored Subaru.

"You three look like you could use a ride," the middle-aged, mammary-mesmerized man muttered.

Ron, noticing this pervert's, (albeit a courteous pervert), fascination with Deidre's figure, figured he was harmless enough. Any dangerous pervert would have done something stupid enough to be in jail by this age. "Yeah, could you take us down to Lakewood?"

"Hop in, I'm just on my way to the mall."

Deidre sat in front to keep perv entertained. This time Gil smoked without asking. Just to antagonize this fuck who thought he might have a shot with the girl of Gil's dream, and knowing damn well that he wouldn't dream of kicking us out. Perv glared at Gil in the rear-view mirror, and Gil blew smoke directly at perv's right ear. Nothing was said, but all was understood.

Ron, never one to be shy, and too high to be self-conscious, asked a little favor. "Fire up some tunes man."

"Oh, you guys want to hear some music. How about KYGO?" This was the wrong thing to say, and the wrong guy to say it to. KYGO, the number one station in the city, and all country

hits all the time. One repetitive, predictable, derivative, moronic, calculated, narrow-minded, co-dependent, stupefying 3-chord pile of interminable rotting dog shit after another.

"Don't make me hit you." Ron warned, in all seriousness.

Perv, instincts not just dulled by suburban convenience and television, but outright blunted, was immediately convinced he was going to be murdered. The thought had crossed Ron's mind, especially when he pictured perv buying Shania Twain posters and fucking his hand. Slamming on the brakes, perv jerked the car to the shoulder, undid his seatbelt and ran into the woods. Deidre, a woman of little forethought but much action, hopped onto the driver's side, pulled the door shut and stood on the accelerator.

The little four-cylinder lurched, spit gravel like an amazon tree frog spits poison, and plunged into the road. The metaphor of the road is such a common theme in literature that it behooves any hack writer to incorporate it at some point in time. The most common way of dealing with it is to relate uncertainty and opportunity. New horizons, new beginnings, leaving the past behind. Adventure, romance, the unknown. The romantic image of travel has a strong grip on the American psyche, but it is entirely unfounded. Roads are gravel, tar (which is petroleum based), and paint. Nothing more. They offer no hope, they produce no solutions, they are the color of death, and, statistically, are the place where you are most likely to put yourself in the hospital. Let go of the road-metaphor. Find something new to romanticize, perhaps extension cords or assembly lines, but the open highway is a place where losers dream and dreamers lose. Gil dreamed of a warm bed, a bottle of vintage port, and Deidre in heat.

Safely dreaming, but driving, make that speeding, into a no-win situation. Letting go of the past is one of the most difficult things a human can do, but, even harder than that, is letting go of the future. Deidre had been doing her own

soul-searching while on that dark path last night. Hopelessness, emptiness, age, fear, despair, all piled on her like a damp sweater. She would have to let go of the future. Her future with Gil could never happen. Investigations, mobsters, corrupt police, anonymity, loneliness, dragging the man she loved down with her, or losing him forever.

Ron stared at the concave granite wall flashing past. Contemplating what separated his atoms from those that composed rock. His conclusion, only their alignment. Deidre looked back at Gil with an almost sad compassion. In a moment of utter melancholy, jumped over the seat and embraced Gil. Their lips pressed as the Subaru sailed into the air towards the creek bed. Rotating freely, unhindered by the friction of the atmosphere, utterly weightless, no longer dependent on the road for its identity, the automobile was liberated. Ron, startled back to reality, and facing finality, grabbed the cigarette out of Gil's left hand, puffed once and laughed out loud.

All of the functions of time work equally well in reverse. This is one of the most fascinating aspects of physics. T or -T, that is the question. Placing value judgments on something as subjective as time is certainly arbitrary and entirely unfair. Begin and end on your own schedule, and when it's time to play it all back, try to enjoy it a little more because every moment is unique, and all the moments together are all you really are.

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